



ANCIENT GODLY MONARCH

BOOK 01

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Ancient Godly Monarch

(太古神王)

by

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Synopsis

Within the Province of the Nine Skies, far above the heavens, there exists nine galaxies of astral rivers. Each of these astral rivers is made up of the combination of countless constellations interwoven together. These nine galaxies can also be collectively known as the Nine Layers of Heaven.

Legend has it that the strongest cultivators in the Province of the Nine Skies were beings that could open an astral gate every time they advanced into a new realm. Their talent in cultivation was such that they could even establish innate links with constellations that existed on a higher layer than the Nine Layers of Heaven, eventually transforming into the heaven-defying and earth-shattering powers known as the War Gods within the Nine Layers of Heaven.

Qin Wentian is the MC of this story. How can a guy, who has a broken set of meridians, successfully cultivate? There are countless Stellar Martial Cultivators, the same as there are countless constellations within the vast starry skies. Yet, what he wants to be, is the brightest constellation of all, the one which shines the most dazzlingly within the vast and starry skies.

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AGM 001 – Cultivation With Broken Meridians

Within the Province of the Nine Skies, far above the heavens, there exists nine galaxies of astral rivers. Each of these astral river is made up of the combination of countless constellations interwoven together. These nine galaxies can also be collectively known as the Nine Layers of Heaven.

Humans of this cultivation-oriented world advocate the importance of meditation as a method to sense the Yuan Qi of Heavens and Earth. From a young age, they would practice breathing techniques, to train the spiritual Qi in their bodies, and to increase their vitality – they would cultivate their martial techniques in order to eventually become a Martial Cultivator.

Those with exceedingly strong senses could, through mediation, sense the existences of the nine astral rivers. By absorbing the energy projected by the boundless array of stars, and after forming an innate link with any of the constellations, condense an Astral Soul, and become a revered Stellar Martial Cultivator.

But there were even stronger humans, whom after becoming a Stellar Martial Cultivator, continued to train and condense the Astral Qi absorbed from the constellations, unceasingly strengthening the toughness of their bodies, and broke away from the realm of a Stellar Martial Cultivator. They forcefully opened the astral gate within their bodies, enabling them to be able to link with even more constellations, and able to condense more types of different Astral Souls.

Legend has it that the strongest cultivators in the Province of the Nine Skies were beings that could open an astral gate every time they advanced into a new realm. Their talent in cultivation was such that they could even establish innate links with constellations that existed on a higher layer than the Nine Layers of Heaven, eventually transforming into the heaven-defying and earth-shattering powers known as the War Gods within the Nine Layers of Heaven.

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Chu Country, Sky Harmony City, Bai Clan.

The surnamed Bai Autumn Snow's forehead was filled with perspiration – almost as if she was undergoing intense suffering – as she gritted her teeth and continued to persevere on.

Under the curtain of darkness, the radiance of the boundless stars situated above the skies seemed to unceasingly gather and shine onto the body of Autumn Snow, contrasting against her gentle and beautiful frame, and, combined together with her sweat-soaked translucent robe, one could see her jade-white abdomen being revealed. However, at this moment, Qin Wentian had no inclination nor motivation to admire that beautiful scenery.

“Steel your heart, pain is but a passing thought. Relax yourself, imagine yourself to now be filled with beauty and vitality while soaring amidst the nine galaxies of the astral rivers – admiring the beauty of the countless stars, lost in an entrancing dream – and the pain shall slowly subside as you awaken.”

His voice was soft and gentle, and drifted along with the wind into the eardrums of Autumn Snow, causing the convulsions of her body to lessen in intensity.

When the convulsions completely stopped, Qing Wentian took out nine silvery needles, and pierced them through some of the acupoints located at Autumn Snow's head region.

“Ah....” Bai Qing, who was standing near the side as a spectator, involuntarily let out a small gasp, as her hand moved to cover her mouth, after seeing the seemingly crazy actions of Qing Wentian targeting her sister Autumn Snow.

“Attract the energy of the constellations towards your body, circulate the energy along your meridians and energy channels, and seal them inside your astral gate.” Qin Wentian's mystical voice drifted into Autumn Snow's eardrums, guiding her methodically on the steps needed to absorb the energy of the stars, and to circulate it around her body.

“Return back to the Nine Layers of Heaven – you are but an astral projection. Now, find the constellation that resonates with you, and attempt to form an innate link with it.”

Qin Wentian's voice seemed to contain some sort of hypnotism powers, and after a few moments, one could see that slowly, on the surface of Bai Autumn Snow's forehead, a faint shadow was condensing gradually. This process was akin to when a golden peng was spreading its wings, giving off a sensation that was filled

with a sense of beauty and magnificence.

Bai Qing's eyes were wide open; this was... Astral Soul Condensation! Her elder sister Autumn Snow was condensing an Astral Soul!

'I've done all I can, the rest depends on you now.' Qin Wentian silently said in his heart, as his slightly immature face was filled with heaviness as it displayed an extremely serious countenance.

Autumn Snow's body seemed to shine with brilliance, eventually culminating into the cry of a bird, as the faint shadow revolved faster and faster, as it condensed into the shape of a golden peng. A wave of terrifying astral energy emanated forth as Autumn Snow opened her beautiful eyes, which seemed to shine with the luster of the stars in the skies.

"Success!" Bai Qing happily jumped about, as she rushed forward to embrace Qin Wentian in a hug as she stammered incoherently, "Wentian gege [1], it really succeeded!"

After finishing speaking, as if on impulse, Bai Qing moved her head closer and gave Qin Wentian a surprise peck on his cheek.

The kiss was that of the chaste type, full of bubbly innocence. Qin Wentian's eyes flashed with amusement as he burst out into laughter, his previously serious countenance finally relaxed.

"Which Heavenly Layer?" Qin Wentian looking at his fiancée,

smiling as he asked.

“The 3rd Heavenly Layer.” Autumn Snow also smiled. Her smile was filled with resplendence, as it fully brought out her beauty. Autumn Snow was 16 this year, and was one of the four great beauties in the Sky Harmony City, and the eldest daughter of the Bai Clan.

“The 3rd Heavenly Layer, sister could already form an innate connection with one of the constellations of the 3rd layer on her first try. Doesn’t this means that she’ll easily be able to condense her 2nd, and even 3rd Astral Soul in the future? Excellent, let me tell this news to father.” Bai Qing seemed to be even more excited than her elder sister.

“There’s no need for that.” A middle aged man walked by. This was the father of Autumn Snow and Bai Qing, and his name is Bai Qingsong. Looking at Autumn Snow, his hands trembled slightly in excitement as he beamed, “Autumn Snow, you have suffered.”

“Daddy, if it wasn’t for Wentian gege, elder sister might’ve been unable to be as successful in condensing her Astral Soul.” Bai Qing piped in, after which, Bai Qingsong turned his attention to Wentian and laughingly stated: “Wentian, thank you for today. You should rest early, me and Autumn Snow will make a move first.”

“Okay, uncle Bai.” Qin Wentian replied with a smile. Ever since both their clans decided on the marriage engagement three years ago, Bai Qingsong had frequently invited him to stay at the Bai residence, and had treated him very well.

“Bai Qing, you little brat, you follow us too, and don’t disturb your Wentian gege anymore.” Bai Qingsong sternly told Bai Qing. However, Bai Qing stuck her tongue out at him, saying :”I still want to chat with Wentian gege.”

Shaking his head, Bai Qingsong grunted out his agreement and departed together with Autumn Snow.

“Sister Autumn Snow could actually form an innate link with one of the constellation from the 3rd Heavenly Layer... based on Father’s personality, he should’ve gone to inform all the elders of our clan. I, of course, don’t want to go to such a boring place.” Bai Qing secretly whispered to Qin Wentian while giggling. “Wentian gege, I didn’t believe in your methods in the past, but to think that you actually succeeded! In the past, you refused to let my elder sister absorb the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, and also told her not to attempt condensing her Astral Soul earlier. Could it be that you were planning on waiting for today?”

“By absorbing the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, the energy channels and meridians in your body would then be filled with the Yuan Qi you absorbed, which would in turn cause your sensory ability to diminish greatly, which would eventually end up destroying your chance of condensing your Astral Soul.” Qin Wentian replied, lying on the ground as he gazed at the vast starry skies.

“The majority of humans would concurrently absorb the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth while attempting to sense the astral rivers. This way, even if one failed to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator,

it would still have no negative impact on the progress of one's road to become a Martial Cultivator. Yet, the method Wentian gege used totally disregarded the absorption of Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi in an attempt to increase the chance of sensing and condensing an Astral Soul. Isn't this too risky? If one failed to sense the astral rivers in the Nine Layers of Heaven, their path to becoming a Martial Cultivator would be hindered as well, due to the lack of Yuan Qi in their meridians." Bai Qing curiously asked Qin Wentian.

"Qing er, how many types of Astral Souls have you heard of before?" Qin Wentian countered with another question.

"Hmm very little, there are only a few people that have successfully condensed their Astral Souls in the Sky Harmony City, so I don't really know much about this... how about Wentian gege?"

"In the Nine Astral Rivers, there are an infinite number of constellations that can form innate links with Stellar Martial Cultivators. Among the myriad of starry constellations, there too, are an infinite number and type of Astral Souls.

"Those who condense an Astral Soul based on the Leo Constellation, would find that he possesses the tyrannical might of a ferocious beast, easily tearing apart tigers and leopards; those that condense an Astral Soul based on the Heavenly Vision Constellation, would find that their vision and sensory abilities have been greatly enhanced, enabling one to see further, as well as increasing one's ability to predict opponent's movements in a battle; those who condense an Astral Soul based on the Forger Constellation would become a master smith; one based on the

Great Dream Constellation, would allow you to cultivate in your dreams, and even grant you the ability to cause enemies to hallucinate, sinking into your illusions!”

“Wow, cultivating while dreaming, and creating illusions, this is too magical.” Bai Qing murmured in a low voice.

“The size of this province is so immense, I’ve heard that many cultivators from the outside world managed to condense many unique, strange, and fascinating types of Astral Souls; they could even soar through the skies and tunnel through the earth with ease. In this world, Stellar Martial Cultivators are the true rulers and dictators, while the Martial Cultivators could be considered an existence equivalent to ants. If you cannot be one of the rulers, you might as well give up cultivation.” Qin Wentian had a trace of burning intensity in his eyes. He was determined to become an outstanding Stellar Martial Cultivator, condensing many different types of Astral Souls, gaining power and soaring throughout the skies to tour the vast world.

Uncle Black once said that the Sky Harmony City was too small – when compared to the world, it was naught but an insignificant insect.

“But, I heard that...” Bai Qing mumbled hesitantly.

“You heard that I was born with crippled meridians, and was destined never to embark upon the path of cultivation right?” Qin Wentian smiled, as he stood up. “Who said that those born with crippled meridians are unable to cultivate. I will be the one to defy logic, and become an extremely outstanding Stellar Martial

Cultivator.”

Looking at the confident expression on Qin Wentian’s face, Bai Qing also chortled with laughter before adding sincerely :”I too believe in Wentian gege, I shall leave first, lest I interrupt your cultivation to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator.”

“Okay, remember to rest early, and... Do not absorb any Yuan Qi from the Heavens and Earth!” Qin Wentian reminded her again.

“Understood.” Bai Qing stuck out her tongue towards Qin Wentian, before giggling and running away. Looking at the lithe and graceful back view of Bai Qing, Qin Wentian froze as a sudden realization hit him. Unknowingly, this lass had already grown up, the current 15 years old her was no longer the 12 year old lass he knew from three years ago. Qin Wentian broke out into a smile as he lost himself in memories.

After Bai Qing departed, Qin Wentian started his cultivation, and despite his crippled meridians, he still went ahead and closed his eyes, entered into a meditative state. He began attracting the energy of the constellations, circulating them fully around his body through the broken pathways of his meridians. The explosive strength of the energy from the constellations constantly bumped and crashed through the broken pathways, as if they were threatening to grind his meridians into dust.

In that moment, a hideous expression of pain and suffering appeared on the face of Qin Wentian, this pain... compared to the pain Autumn Snow felt earlier, was a spring shower in the face of a thunderstorm! The intensity felt was increased by at least 10x.

Without a choice, he gritted his teeth and persevered on.

The energy channels and meridians were the pathways that connect the energy flow in a human body, but once the meridians are crippled, one can only be considered as a disabled person, equivalent to having an incomplete body. Cultivators, other than expand their energy channels and meridians – after the Body Refinement Realm – had to reconstruct their energy channels, recast their nine great meridians, connecting through to all of the seven main orifices, and refine their internal organs, four limbs, and even their bone structure. Only then would they be able to fully unleash their true potential!

When Qin Wentian intentionally crippled his energy channels and meridians back then, if not for Uncle Black soaking him in various herbal medicine solution for treatment, he would have long since turned into an invalid. The herbal solution was so effective that not only did Qin Wentian not become an invalid, in addition to his efforts of training his body daily, soon afterwards, he began to regain the constitution of a normal human.

Nevertheless, he wasn't an idiot. Crippled meridians was obviously not the goal of Qin Wentian. There was a record in the Stellar Meridians Transformation; only with broken meridians, would one be able to reconstruct and transform them into a perfect set of Stellar Meridians! This concept consisted of destroying first, the imperfect foundation, before re-establishing second, the perfect one!

AGM 002 - Repaying Gratitude With Enmity

The air in the morning was refreshingly clear. Qin Wentian, after meditating through the night, felt refreshingly clear-headed and invigorated. As a result of not absorbing the Yuan Qi from Heavens and Earth, his body was relatively weak. Hence, Qin Wentian would go for a run every morning, using the oldest and most original method of body tempering technique in order to strengthen his body. Everyone in the Bai Clan would see what he was doing daily, and though in the beginning they felt that this type of training method was extremely bizarre, gradually, everyone got used to it.

With his broken meridians, it was impossible for the Young Master-in-law to cultivate even the most basic forms of martial cultivation arts, so it seemed like he was hoping to temper his body by using running as a method to enter into the first level of the body refinement realm. This was nothing but a fool's dream, and as a result, everyone in the Bai Clan despised Qin Wentian. If it wasn't for his good fortune in that he was the young master of the Qin Clan, the Bai Clan Leader would never have chosen such a trashy Young Master-in-law to marry Autumn Snow.

"I heard that the eldest missus broke through and became a Stellar Martial Cultivator last night, I wonder if the marriage engagement will still hold." A few voices, which belonged to the servants of the Bai Clan, were sneakily discussing as they watched Qin Wentian doing his running regime.

"Yeah, I heard that last night, Clan Master gathered all the elders for an urgent meeting, in order to disseminate the news throughout the city. Rumour has it that the Eldest Missus Autumn

Snow has managed to form an innate link with a constellation from the 3rd Heavenly Layer! Even among the Stellar Martial Cultivators, she could be considered to be a peak-level genius.”

“Yup, I agree. Humans naturally have an Astral Gate within them that can be used to store an Astral Soul. But, if one has no talent, there’s no way an Astral Soul will be condensed, and yet, the Eldest Missus could already sense the constellations from the 3rd Layer of Heavens. In the future, when she breaks through the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm, and steps into the Arterial Circulation Realm, she can open yet another Astral Gate, which would then easily aid her in condensing her second Astral Soul. At the very least, it too should be condensed from the 3rd Layer of Heavens... That’s just too terrifying... I don’t dare imagine what level of power she’d have if she opened even more Astral Gates.....”

“Not only that, an Astral Soul that’s been condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, contains an immense amount of energy when compared to Astral Souls that were condensed from the 1st Heavenly Layer. It really appears that that trash’s position will soon disappear.”

What these servants didn’t know was that their low voices had still been heard by Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian had meditated for many years, and thus his sensory abilities were extremely powerful – far beyond that of a normal human. He could even hear and differentiate minute variations in vocal tones. However, Qin Wentian didn’t put the gossip whispered by these servants in his heart. He’d already known Autumn Snow for three years, and had had close interactions daily. The two of them had already reached a stage similar to kinship. Even if Autumn Snow didn’t love him, it didn’t matter, as the two clans they belonged to could just settle

the matter easily with some discussion. It didn't really matter to him even if this marriage failed to go through, for he had long regarded Autumn Snow as his own sister.

“Seven days from now will be Uncle Bai's 50 year old birthday celebration, and I shall condense my Astral Soul on that exact day – that could also be considered a gift to Uncle Bai.”

Qin Wentian smiled as the scenario appear in his mind; everyone thought that he couldn't cultivate due to his broken meridians, yet what they didn't know was that his Uncle Black was the one that'd instructed him to cripple his own meridians! Qin Wentian had never once questioned the words of his Uncle Black, and by using the methods Uncle Black had taught, he'd greatly assisted Autumn Snow in her condensation of her Astral Soul. However, Uncle Black's personality was eccentric, and had strictly forbidden Qin Wentian to mention his existence in front of others.

Qin Wentian slowed his steps as, unknowingly, he had arrived at the courtyard of Bai Qingsong's residence.

“Wentian.” A voice drifted closer, only for the silhouette of Bai Qingsong to appear. He looked at him before asking, “Jogging again?”

“En.” Qing Wentian nodded his head :”How's Autumn Snow, I wish to visit her.”

“Wentian, even if you're unable to cultivate, it doesn't matter. Don't be too hard on yourself.” Bai Qingsong didn't answer Qin

Wentian's question, giving Qin Wentian a shock momentarily, before he calmed himself and replied: "I'll work harder."

"You don't need to force yourself, in fact, being an ordinary human, setting up a family, and peacefully living one's life, is a rather good choice too." Bai Qingsong continued saying, causing Qin Wentian to freeze up on the spot, after which, he glanced towards Bai Qingsong as he couldn't help but feel that he was talking to a stranger.

"Okay." Qin Wentian forced a smile on his face before saying: "Uncle Bai, I'll be leaving first."

"Okay, take note not to run around for these few days." Bai Qingsong lightly intoned, and after Qin Wentian left, he didn't let Bai Qingsong nor Autumn Snow meet for two days, while the news about Autumn Snow condensing an Astral Soul spread across the entire Sky Harmony City.

When Day number three arrived, it was already morning by the time Qin Wentian had completed his meditation. As he strolled outside, he realised that there were two guards blocking his way. At this moment, his heart sank and his expression turned frosty before stating, "What do you all mean by this?"

"It's very chaotic outside. Young Master Qin had best peacefully stay here for the next few days." One of the guards interjected back coldly, as Qin Wentian's heart continued sinking. Previously, everyone in the Bai Clan would greet him as Young Master-in-law respectfully, but now, this guard had actually dared to use such a cold tone of voice whilst speaking to him.

What Qin Wentian was concerned about, was not the title of Young Master-in-law, but the attitude behind those words.

“What happened?” Qing Wentian suddenly felt a chill in his bones. Ever since he had assisted Autumn Snow in condensing her Astral Soul, he felt that everything had turned topsy-turvy.

“It’s better for Young Master Qin to mind your own business, and obediently stay inside your residence.”

“How dare you.” Qing Wentian excoriated: “I want to see Uncle Bai.”

Only to see that one of the guards burst out coldly laughing, glaring at Qin Wentian before saying :”Trash, I shall say it again, you better obediently stay in your residence. Did you really think that you were our Young Master-in-law?”

Qin Wentian’s heart had sunk down to the bottom of the valley. He wasn’t a dumb person, how could he not have guessed at what was happening? He was imprisoned now, and when he thought back to the words Uncle Bai had said to him a few nights before, he knew that the Bai Clan wanted to destroy this marriage engagement.

“Uncle Bai, if you wanted to annul the marriage agreement, you could have directly spoken to me.” Qin Wentian murmured in his heart, as he felt the rending of his heartstrings. Could it be that the interactions between him and the Bai Clan for the past three years

had been nothing but an act?

Qin Wentian knew that the reason why the Bai Clan was willing to propose a marriage engagement with him back then was because they'd wanted to borrow the strength of the Qin Clan. But to think that the Bai Clan would dare to act this way today...

"SHUT YOUR MOUTH." A reproachful voice rang out, and Qin Wentian turned his head to see Bai Qing running towards him, before pulling him into his residence.

"Wentian gege." Bai Qing's eyes were both tinged red with tears as she looked at Qin Wentian: "Wentian gege, my Bai Clan has let you down."

"I don't understand." Qin Wentian asked: "Qing`er, I want to meet with your father. If he is unwilling to go through with the marriage, I could ask my adoptive father to discuss annulling the marriage engagement with him. I, Qin Wentian, wouldn't force someone to do the things they don't want to do."

"Wentian gege, my dad... the Bai Clan... they may want to kill you." Tears were flowing down Bai Qing's face as her voice was breaking. Her voice was akin to a clap of thunder that struck right at Qin Wentian's heart, causing him to be stupefied. "Kill me?"

"Why?" Qin Wentian was at a loss, as he didn't understand.

"Don't ask why, Wentian gege, you better leave fast." Bai Qing

tearfully implored. Qin Wentian contemplated for a moment, before saying, "But I'm already imprisoned, how do I leave?"

"I've long prepared a fast steed for you at the backgate. You just need to hold me as a hostage and leave." Bai Qing took out a dagger and passed it over to Qin Wentian, beckoning him closer.

"Clan Master." Outside the residence where Qin Wentian was imprisoned, a voice drifted over in addition to the sounds of many footsteps, causing Bai Qing's face to turn pale with fright. "Wentian gege, hurry up."

"Qing`er, tell me, the reason." Qin Wentian's steady eyes stared resolutely at Bai Qing as he slowly enunciated each word. Bai Qing hurriedly stated, "After elder sister became a genius, that very night, the news had already been disseminated throughout the Chu Country, and eventually, the Ye Clan from the Royal City expressed their interest in a marriage engagement."

"The Ye Clan from the Royal City." The coldness in Qin Wentian's heart grew colder in intensity by a few more degrees. "They are the sworn enemies of my Qin Clan, so, the Bai Clan wanted to use my life to announce that they have truly cut off all ties with my Qin Clan, and use my death as a betrothal gift to the Ye Clan from the Royal City."

"Wentian gege, quick, stop talking please." Bai Qing stuffed the dagger into the hands of Qin Wentian, only to see him shake his head, and caress her adorable face as his cold visage broke out into a gentle smile : "I, Qin Wentian, no matter how powerless I am, I could still not stoop so low as to point a dagger at you."

The door was pushed open, as Bai Qing's face instantly turned pale.

“Bai Qing, come here.” Bai Qingsong coldly stated.

“No, daddy, elder sister only managed to condense her Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer due to the assistance from Wentian gege! Why are we repaying his gratitude with enmity?!” Bai Qing hollered at her father.

“What do you know? Your sister's talent is far beyond your imagination! She condensed her Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer solely based on her own abilities, through her own efforts. When did she ever needed his assistance?” Bai Qingsong stated calmly while looking at Bai Qing. He softened his tone, “Qing`er, you are still young and insensible, listen to daddy, come back here.”

“Qing`er, go over.” Qin Wentian gently smiled at Bai Qing, causing her to stiffen as she mouthed, “Wentian gege.”

“Remember what I have taught you.” Qin Wentian rustled the hair on Bai Qing's head, as he gently pushed Bai Qing towards the direction of Bai Qingsong. After which, he glanced at Bai Qingsong, before calmly saying, “Uncle Bai, what do you intend to do with me?”

“Qin Wentian, not only are you a heaven-born trash, your conduct is questionable too – to think that you have designs on my

little daughter. You tell me, how should I deal with you?”

The current Bai Qingsong felt like a complete stranger to Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian only response was to laugh, as the last hope in his heart flickered out. Looking at Bai Qingsong, he asked :”I only want to know, regarding this, what was Autumn Snow’s reaction?”

“You have no need to know.” Bai Qingsong coldly replied, as killing intent began emitting from him.

“Today, if I were to die in the Bai Clan, no matter what the reason was, I dare to guarantee this. My foster father would surely lead his army and trample the Bai’s residence into a flatground.” Qin Wentian unexpectedly stated, with no fear in his eyes. In that instant, the previously gentle looking countenance of Qin Wentian, underwent a swift transformation into an expression exhibiting a steel-like determination.

“Uncle Bai, the Bai Clan still does not have the ability to contend against my Qin Clan, I urge you, you better not make a move against me.”

Shocked to his core, Bai Qingsong looked Qin Wentian in his eye. To think that this gentle looking youth still had such a ferocious side to him. After contemplating for some time, Bai Qingsong turned his back and departed. “Escort the second young miss back to her room, and don’t let her take a single step out of there. And as for Qin Wentian, ensure that he doesn’t step out of the entrance of this courtyard.”

AGM 003 – Awakening Of A Genius

As he looked at Bai Qingsong and his men departing, Qin Wentian couldn't help but feel the biting cold of winter gnawing on his soul. In the space of a single night, all roots of relationship that had been built between them seemed to have been instantly severed — the once harmonious Uncle Bai actually had the intention to kill him!

Despite Qin Wentian's mental state and temperament being extraordinary, he could still feel the numbness in his heart, making him unable to settle down for a long period of time. Eventually, after Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, the shadow of a smile gradually resurfaced once again on his slightly immature face. So what if human relations run thin? He just needed to be himself. He knew that the kindness shown to him by his foster father was as weighty as a mountain, and then there was still Qing'er; she had unhesitatingly gone behind her own father's back, and warned him of the danger.

However, the Qin Wentian now didn't have the time to process his thoughts — he only knew that he had to extricate himself from his current situation, and it seemed like cultivating was the only way to do so.

Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly, glancing down at the piece of rock that had always hung on his chest, while saying, "That damn old fogey. Uncle Black said that the only thing you left for me, was this piece of broken stone. Don't pull me into hell to meetup so soon."

After that, Qin Wentian took out the nine silvery needles, and pierced them through the acupoints located on his head. He swiftly closed his eyes, and steeled his heart, as he forgot everything, and entering into that state of deep meditation, envisioning himself as a vessel. Very swiftly, Qin wentian managed to sense the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, as well as the existence of Astral Energy. This was the effect of meditation — as for how strong or weak the sensation was, it all depended on the power of one's sensory abilities.

The sensory abilities of Qin Wentian were incomparably, exceedingly, strong. This type of strength, other than his own innate talent, was also the result of Qin Wentian assiduously practicing meditation every day. Despite it still being daytime, he rapidly entered the necessary state, and attracted the Astral Energy towards his body, before circulating it around the pathway of his meridians.

At this moment, despite the fact that the entirety of Qin Wentian's energy channels and meridians had long been crippled, he didn't mind, and continued to circulate the Astral Energy around his body. He remained in this state all the way until the moon had risen, and until the light from the constellations had started cascading down towards Qin Wentian's body, enveloping it in a layer of starlight.

Qin Wentian, using his imagination, envisioned a pathway into Nine Layers of Heaven. His sensory abilities continued accelerating through this pathway, reaching higher and higher in an attempt to sense the Astral Rivers from the Nine Layers of Heaven. This self-hypnosis technique was taught to him by none other than his Uncle Black. Sometimes, it was necessary for humans to gain an

even stronger will and intention from self-hypnosis.

Along with the rising reach of his sensory abilities, Qin Wentian began to feel a slight amount of pressure as his sensory abilities reached higher and higher. Nevertheless, this was unable to stop him. Suddenly, Qin Wentian could feel himself standing in the middle of the boundless starry space — he had arrived at the 1st Astral River!

Everytime he was here, Qin Wentian would feel his soul being stirred by the majesty of the boundless space. Standing alongside the innumerable constellations within the Nine Heavenly Astral Rivers, he felt as insignificant as an ant, like a grain of sand on the beach, or like a droplet of water in the vast ocean!

“Broom Constellation.” Qin Wentian could sense the first constellation in his surroundings as the constellation took the shape of a broom — it was the Broom Constellation. (TL: Broom Constellation/Broom Star is a pun in chinese for being a jinx, signifying bad luck.)

“The Drooping Willow Constellation... if I condense an Astral Soul after forming an innate link with it, my body will take on the properties of being soft and flexible, akin to a willow.”

“Water Snake Constellation, Heavenly Zither Constellation.” Qin Wentian sucked in a huge breath, it appeared that, as long he was willing, he could form an innate link with any of the constellations in his surrounding — even those constellations that were deemed as ultimates by the Stellar Martial Cultivators. However, he didn’t want to give in so early. Calming himself, Qin Wentian allowed his

senses to soar even further, passing the 1st Layer of Heaven, and going all the way up before stepping into the 3rd Layer of Heaven.

The amount of pressure he felt got more and more intense, and Qin Wentian lamented that he no longer had the luxury to be as carefree and relaxed, as he slowly contemplated which constellation to pick like back when he was in the 1st Layer of Heaven. However, if this thing were to be known to the other Stellar Martial Cultivators, they would be infuriated to the point of puking blood. Qin Wentian himself, didn't know how strong his sensory abilities were. But just by taking Autumn Snow as an example, after she'd condensed an Astral Soul by forming an innate link with one of the constellations in the 3rd Heavenly Layer, her name had already resounded throughout the entirety of the Chu Country.

“Indeed, the level of power an Astral Soul possesses after forming an innate link with a constellation from the Third Heavenly Layer is simply, incomparably, stronger than those of the 1st and 2nd Layer. However the 3rd Layer of Heaven is still not my limit, I can still go further.”

As Qin Wentian's sensory abilities continued soaring upwards, the pressure he felt also increased in intensity. It was as if the pressure wanted to stop him from continuing, as Qin Wentian had also begun to feel waves of stabbing pain within his mind. Despite this, he still gritted his teeth and persevered on.

“Pain is but a passing thought, I need to relax myself, the pain will subside as I awaken.”

Qin Wentian had arrived at the 4th Layer of Heaven, where the

constellations were all emanating a terrifying energy, causing him to have a strong impulse to rush and form an innate link with them. Qin Wentian knew that, as long as he was willing, he could immediately become an unprecedented genius of the Chu Country

“Uncle Black once prepared for me all of the information regarding constellations from the 5th Layer of Heaven, therefore it’s evident what his expectations are for me.” Qin Wentian silently braced himself, as he forced his senses to their utmost limit, attempting to continue upwards to the 5th Layer of Heaven.

“Forming an innate link and condensing an Astral Soul is very difficult. Other than talent, one must also have an immense amount of determination.” Qin Wentian told himself that he needed to bear the fiery waves of stabbing pains in his mind, as he continued upwards. Finally, he stepped past the 4th Astral River, and arrived at the 5th Layer of Heaven!

In front of him, there was a constellation in the shape of a skull, emitting a fearsome aura filled with evil and malice.

“Skull Constellation.” Qin Wentian averted his Astral Body, as he shifted his senses away. Currently, unlike his experiences in the 1st Heavenly Layer, he no longer had the ability to sense all the constellations in one go. He could only attempt to sense each constellation one by one.

A short moment later, he came across a constellation that seemed to be filled with a volcanic fiery aura. “This is.. This is the Ember Lion Constellation! If i formed an innate link with it, I would gain the ability to control the power of flames at a terrifying level, and

the power I would wield then would be extremely tyrannical!” Qin Wentian contemplated, but eventually decided not to make his decision so hastily, as he still wanted to explore the starry horizons in order to sense other constellations.

After which, he sensed another constellation nearby that had taken on the shape of a huge hammer — it was the Heavenly Hammer Constellation!

“Heavenly Hammer Constellation.” Qin Wentian thought of the information Uncle Black had given him regarding this particular constellation. Suddenly, he steeled his heart as he decided to take a gamble.

His extraordinary sensory abilities began to rapidly reach out to in an attempt to connect and form an innate link with the Heavenly Hammer Constellation. He imagined himself as a willing vessel, as he slowly integrated with the Astral Energy from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, while the stabbing pains in his mind intensified.

Columns of starlight began cascading down from Heaven, shooting past the various Astral Rivers, before shining down upon the currently cultivating body of Qin Wentian, shrouding his body in a starry radiance. The Astral Energy began to meld with his body, as some of the starlight concentrated on the stone that always hung around his neck.

At this moment, after the terrifying Astral Energies had gathered on the “common” stone hanging on the neck of Qin Wentian, the stone began shining with a dazzling brilliance, as it began to

disintegrate. The remnants integrated into the body of Qin Wentian fully, until the stone completely disappeared. Only now, did the columns of starlight fully concentrate and shine on Qin Wentian's body. Converging onto many points, the immense amount of Astral Energy was incomparably tyrannical.

A faint shadow with the shape of the Heavenly hammer began to coalesce on Qin Wentian's body, while the pain in his mind was so intense, that it was nearly comparable to an explosion. However, how could Qin Wentian give up at this point in time? He gritted his teeth, doggedly intending to continue on with no hints of giving up, as he let the Astral Qi circulate through the pathways of his broken meridians, gradually forming into the shape of a Qi spiral, and at the same time, risking his life to complete the condensation of his Astral Soul. For only after that, could he be considered as to have truly stepped into the ranks of the Stellar Martial Cultivators.

“Hong Long Long!” Sounds of rumbling rang out from within Qin Wentian's body, as the tyrannical Astral Qi dashed chaotically about in the pathways of his broken energy channels and meridians, following the direction dictated by the Qi Spiral, frenziedly revolving about, circulating through his entire body. Qin Wentian knew that this was the most critical junction — that only after he succeeded, could he be considered to have finished his transformation.

The extraordinary pain was incomparably tough to bear, but what was even more horrifying was that Qin Wentian still needed to split his mind to focus on completing the two tasks; both the condensation of his Astral Soul, and the reconstruction of his entire meridian and energy channel's structure throughout his body.

“Pain, is but a passing thought.” Qin Wentian’s heart was filled with determination, as the tyrannical energy Qi Spiral in his body opened up an Astral Energy pathway, connecting it throughout his body, and successfully forming the legendary unique set of Stellar Meridians.

At the same time, the Heavenly Hammer gradually took shape, while blood seeped out the corner of his mouth. Finally, Qin Wentian spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, before fainting into unconsciousness.

At the same time as Qin Wentian fainted, far off in the distance, away from the Bai Clan’s residence, Mustang was standing near a window inside the Clear Wind Inn. There was a faint shadow of an Astral Soul on his forehead. This Astral Soul was condensed by forming an innate link with the Heavenly Vision Constellation, and was one of the three Astral Souls condensed by Mustang — the Heavenly Vision Astral Soul.

“What a strong astral light, Autumn Snow’s talent is indeed extraordinary. It seems like she shouldn’t have any problem passing the first round of inspection.” Mustang cast his gaze upon the horizons, focusing on the starlight cascading down at location of the Bai Clan. Only after the astral pressure had faded, did he let out a breath that he didn’t even realise he was holding. The pressure emitted from that source of Astral Power, at the very least, belonged to a constellation of the 3rd Heavenly layer, and in the Bai Clan, other than Autumn Snow, there were no others who could form an innate link with constellations from the 3rd Layer of Heaven.

Stretching his body, Mustang decided to retire for the night. After hearing that Autumn Snow of the Sky Harmony City had managed to condense an Astral Soul from the 3rd Layer of Heaven, the Emperor of Chu Country had immediately sent people to investigate, and Mustang was among the group of scouts sent out. Despite the intense competition between the scouts, Mustang wasn't worried that there would be people who'd snatch Autumn Snow away from his hands. After all, he was the representative from the prestigious Emperor Star Academy.

AGM 004 – The Tempered Thousand-Hammer Refinement Technique

Qin Wentian regained consciousness in the middle of the night, and as he shook his head, his heart thumped in confusion.

“My Astral Soul.....” Qin Wentian mumbled, as if was trying to recall something, and he suddenly closed his eyes, entering into a meditative state. The next moment, a ray of dazzling light lit up the whole room, and on Qin Wentian’s forehead, a faint shadow in the shape of a huge hammer appeared. It was incomparably resplendent — as if it was interwoven from starlight.

“Success! To think that I’d successfully condense my Astral Soul by forming an innate link and communicating with the Heavenly Hammer Constellation. Now, I just need a set of cultivation techniques that can fully match up and complement my Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul so that I can unleash my full power.” Qin Wentian muttered to himself. After which, Qin Wentian slightly knit his eyebrows, as he discovered that there seemed to be traces of starlight hidden inside his sea of consciousness.

“What is that?” Qin Wentian delved deep within his sea of consciousness in order to investigate. In his sea of consciousness, there too, existed a faint shadow in the shape of the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, which was fully occupying his Astral Gate. As he delved even deeper in, he could sense that there seemed to be a tiny being made of Astral Energy suspended behind the faint shadow, which was constantly emitting an intangible source of Astral Energy — which seemed to be locking down the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul.

Qin Wentian scratched his head in confusion, why would such a thing appeared in his sea of consciousness?

“Could it be....” Qin Wentian vaguely remembered some of the scenes that happened before he fainted. To confirm his guess, he hurriedly glanced at the stone which had always hung around his neck. There was only the string left — the stone had disappeared!

“Ahh, that stone was left by that damn old fogey for me.” Qin Wentian’s countenance stiffened.

(TL: the stone was left by his blood father)

At this moment, all of the light which was being radiated out from the Astral Being seemed to be released onto the top of the faint shadow of the Heavenly Hammer. The points of starlight released were saturated to the point of explosion, and then suddenly, bang! As he felt a splitting pain in his head, memory fragments begin to flow through Qin Wentian’s sea of consciousness. After this, the light from the astral being begin to dim rapidly, as it seemed to fade away totally, to the point where Qin Wentian was unable to even sense it.

“Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique. This is... A memory storage technique! That Astral Being actually contained volumes of memories in it, and after it sensed the existence of the Astral Soul, it somehow integrated with it!” Qin Wentian’s heart was beating rapidly in excitement as he deduced what had happened. Suddenly, memories began appearing in his mind — a

set of cultivation technique that could use either the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth or the Astral Qi to temper his body, harden his bones, cleanse his meridians of impurities, and strengthen his organs! This was the first realm of a Martial Cultivator, the Body Refinement Realm, in order to allow a cultivator to have a perfect body.

There were a total of nine levels to the Body Refinement Realm. After obtaining a perfect body and undergoing impurity cleansing, one would be able to make use of their inner Yuan to stimulate the potential of the vital acupoints, providing a boost of strength. After which, all of their energy channels and meridians would be interconnected, and form a circulatory pathway, where all the blood vessels were enlarged. This way, inexhaustible strength would rotate around the newly connected pathways — through the meridians and energy channels — and generate boundless might with the aid of certain martial techniques. This realm, was the Arterial Circulation Realm.

The Body Refinement Realm – A perfect human body that could tap into the full potential of humans. Possessing herculean strength that would allow one to tear apart leopards and tigers, cleaving huge rocks in twain.

Arterial Circulation Realm – Able to generate boundless might, and gain terrifying strength. There was almost nothing that one couldn't accomplish.

After this, was the legendary realm that possessed peerless might, the Yuanfu Realm (TL:Yuan Palace Realm, somewhat similar to Zifu Realm [Violet Palace Realm] in The Desolate Era) –

In this stage, the entire Yuan Energy in one's body would be condensed into liquid form, establishing the foundations for a Yuan Palace within one's body. Cultivators at this stage possessed peerless, tyrannical strength, and were able to soar through the skies with ease.

For Stellar Martial Cultivators that had condensed an Astral Soul, they would naturally be able to absorb Yuan Qi from the Constellations into their own body. The Yuan Qi from the Constellations was known as Astral Yuan Qi, or Astral Qi. The Astral Qi absorbed by the Stellar Martial Cultivators would complement the Constellation with which they had formed an innate link from. For example, those who condensed their Astral Souls based on the Leo Constellation, the Astral Qi in their bodies would take on properties similar to that of their constellation. Which meant, they would have the might of a ferocious lion, and during times when they struck out, their might multiplied. By using their Astral Qi in conjunction with their Astral Soul, the might unleashed would be even stronger. This was why Stellar Martial Cultivators were the rulers of all in this world.

“Common Cultivation Techniques — tempering and refining the body through suffering and pain. But this Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, it's even more perverse — it's akin to self-torture! Repeatedly undergoing the blows of a smith's hammer, 100 times, and then 1000 times. Steel needs to be hammered repeatedly before it can be forged into a good sword. Only through constant refinement, will one be able to break through their limits and overcome themselves.” Qin Wentian's heart palpitated as he gained sudden enlightenment. After which, he got up and walked outside to the training grounds located within the backyard.

“Hu...” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath before inclining his head to look up at the boundless stars in the skies. A slight smile appeared on his face. Now that he had condensed an Astral Soul, he could finally absorb the Astral Qi from the constellations and embark on the pathway to cultivation.

Closing his eyes, Qin Wentian released his Astral Soul, as well as using his sensory abilities to feel the innate connection to the Heavenly Hammer Constellation located within the 5th Layer of Heavens. As this moment, an overbearing, extremely tyrannical Astral Qi, cascaded down onto Qin Wentian’s body, shrouding his body in a layer of starlight. Qin Wentian could clearly feel every minute fluctuation of that overbearing, extremely tyrannical Astral Qi, which originated from the 5th Heavenly Layer.

The gulf between the might of Astral Qi of Stellar Martial Cultivators who’d condensed their Astral Souls from the 5th Layer of Heavens, was incomparably wide in comparison to those from the 1st and 2nd Heavenly Layer. There was no way to compare them at all.

After a long time passed, and once Qin Wentian’s capacity for absorption was finally filled to the brim, he began executing the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique. Instantly, numerous astral hammers coalesced within his body and started flying around and hammering frenziedly. Only absorbing the Astral Qi wouldn’t enable him to reach the desired effect of the Body Refinement Realm, the only method was to use the cultivation art he gained, in conjunction with the Astral Qi absorbed. Only then would his body become stronger, and achieve the true effects of Body Refinement.

“How painful.” Rivulets of sweat began appearing on the forehead of Qin Wentian, while grinding sounds rang out from within his body, as he endured the constant attacks from the Astral Hammers within his body. Only through enduring this excruciating pain generated by the tortuous Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique would he be able to achieve a perfect body. The more tyrannical the source of Astral Qi was, the higher the pain intensity level would be.

“Ah...” Qin Wentian involuntarily let out a low roar, but was still determined to bear the pain inflicted by the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique. The volume of the rumbling sounds that rang out got more and more terrifying, as the Astral Qi in his body was totally exhausted. However, this wasn’t the end yet. Refusing to give up, Qin Wentian stood up on his feet as a Heavenly Hammer materialized in his hands. He began to wield the hammer in a graceful dance, while enduring the agonizing pain. This was what cultivating the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique meant. Only by going through tens of thousands of hammer blows, would he be able to transcend his limits and gain the desired effect.

From the 5th Layer of Heavens, the starlight from the constellation shined down onto the Heavenly Hammer that was being wielded in that graceful dance by Qin Wentian.. Crackling sounds rang out as the hammer begin to undergo unceasing transformations.

After 100 repetitions, the unique set of Stellar Meridians within Qin Wentian’s body also gradually transformed into the shape of the Heavenly Hammer, while the Astral Qi circulated through the pathways of the Stellar Meridians around his whole body,

smoothly without a hitch. The feeling emitted was extremely comfortable, to the point where Qin Wentian had forgotten about all the pain and tiredness that occurred from before.

A “Ka Cha!” sounded out from within Qin Wentian’s body — it was as if all his sinew, meridians, bones, and muscles were shuddering at the same moment.

And finally, after a few more rounds of breaking his limits, the ordeal was finally over. Pointing both his palms towards the ground, Qin Wentian rapidly respired. This Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique really caused him to put his life on the line. Qin Wentian’s body now was beyond the extremities of soreness and pain, and was totally devoid of strength, as if it would disintegrate into dust at any moment.

“Could it be that because I’ve never cultivated before, that the constitution of my body is weak, and thus the foundation shallow? Maybe that’s why I’m suffering so much now.” Qin Wentian murmured, as he sat cross-leggedly on the ground, no longer wielding the huge hammer. The supply of Astral Qi seemed inexhaustible, as the starlight continuously cascaded down on him. Qin Wentian absorbed the Astral Qi, in an attempt to recover quicker.

The night passed quickly, and dawn approached. The air was filled with traces of dampness, but the Qin Wentian who was cultivating on the ground didn’t feel any hints of frigidity. Opening his eyes, Qin Wentian stood up as he moved his body about, only to feel that his movements were smooth and unhindered, without any traces of the suffering that he’d

undergone yesterday.

At this moment, Qin Wentian felt fully invigorated and his body was filled with strength. He'd never once felt so strong before.

“What a strong recovery ability, indeed worthy of being the Heavenly Hammer Constellation.” Recalling the research done by his Uncle Black, the reason why he selected the Heavenly Hammer Constellation to form an innate link with was because of a few special capabilities that only the Heavenly Hammer Constellation possessed:

1) Explosive Strength 2) Invulnerable Defense 3) High-speed Regeneration. Not only that, the Heavenly Hammer Constellation could also be used for the forging of weapons, granting him insights and increasing his level of talent in forging abilities.

“Using the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, and unceasingly transcending my limits, I used only a single night to reach the 3rd level of the Body Refinement Realm. All this was endowed to me by my Astral Soul and Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique. Now it's time to test my actual level of strength.”

Qin Wentian walked towards a stone bench, and struck down after gathering his strength. A rumbling sound resounded out, as the stone bench was instantly shattered into dust, turning into a pile of residue on the ground.

“So this is my strength! How terrifying, a casual strike of mine

already exceeds the strength level of nine bulls and two tigers.” Qin Wentian muttered to himself. The strength level of nine bulls and two tigers signified herculean strength, and to a martial cultivator, as long as they stepped into the 3rd level of the Body Refinement Realm, they too, would possess such a terrifying amount of strength.

At the first level of Body Refinement Realm, one would possess the strength of a single bull; at the second level of the Body Refinement Realm, one would possess the strength of four bulls; at the third level of the Body Refinement Realm, one would possess the strength of 9 bulls; if one managed to break through to the ninth level of the Body Refinement Realm, they would possess strength equivalent to that of 81 bulls. With a perfect body, and unimaginable terrifying amount of strength — this was the reason why countless people wanted to become a Martial Cultivator.

Strength!

After becoming a Martial Cultivator, one would be able to possess herculean strength. However, this only referred to the power division among the common Martial Cultivators. As for Stellar Martial Cultivators who used Astral Energy, the power they possessed would doubtlessly be many folds stronger than Martial Cultivators at the same level.

In only the span of a single night, the Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique had enabled him to possess a strength level exceeding that of nine bulls. How could Qin Wentian not be happy. Walking to the centre of the training grounds, he prepared to continue executing the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement

Technique — to continue enduring the torturous excruciating pain in order to strengthen his body. In actuality, this was considered very normal for Qin Wentian. Stellar Martial Cultivators who condensed an Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer, were capable of absorbing Astral Qi that was extremely tyrannical in nature. With such an overbearing Astral Qi from the 5th Heavenly Layer, in addition to the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, at the very least, in the initial stage of cultivation, one would easily be able to refine their body and gain a massive surge in their power.

Right now, Qin Wentian didn't wish to waste any more time. He was afraid that his foster father still didn't know the truth of his situation. Staying in the Bai Clan was not a good solution, as there was danger lurking everywhere. He wanted to depend on his own strength and leave here as soon as possible.

AGM 005 – Autumn Snow's Attitude

Inside Clear Wind Inn, Mustang was sitting by the window seat and enjoying liquor by himself.

Bai Qingsong's 50th birthday celebration would occur three days later. It was said that this time round, the Bai Clan had sent invitations throughout the country, and there would be plenty of big shots coming from the royal capital of the Chu Country. Patrons around the other tables begin their discussion — most of them were here just for the bustle and excitement.

“En, that was what I heard too. It seems like this Bai Qingsong is using his daughter's breakthrough to raise his own position. But his daughter's talent is really too terrifying, to think that she could condense an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Her future potential cannot be underestimated. When she opens up her second and third Astral Gates, she could condense at least two additional Astral Souls that are at least of the 3rd Heavenly Layer, or even higher. Such talent, even in the Chu Country, is considered extremely important, akin to a great personage.”

“Damn straight! I've heard that the Bai Clan still wants to annul their previous marriage engagement, but this is something to be expected. That Qin Wentian from the Qin Clan is just a piece of trash, what status does he have, to be mentioned in the same breath as Autumn Snow? Anyone with half a brain would kick him away. I also heard that the trashy young master still wasted plenty of the Qin Clan's Yuan Meteor Stones. I really don't know why Qin Chuan still loves and treasures this foster child so much.”

Many people silently shook their heads, as they were unable to understand this matter. At this moment, all the chatter instantly ceased, as a silhouette wearing a long dress could be seen making its way up the stairs of the inn. As the person in question came into view, everyone was awed by her beauty. Without a doubt, this was a lady from an eminent clan.

“Autumn Snow, the genius from the Bai Clan.” Someone intoned in a low voice. Mustang, who was nearby, stole a glance at Bai Autumn Snow, and silently approved of her. This little girl wasn’t bad indeed, with a high level of talent in addition to a beautiful visage. No wonder the Ye Clan was interested in proposing a marriage engagement with her.

After which, Mustang continued to enjoy his liquor and shifted his attention away. His gaze was overlooking the direction of the Bai Clan as he mused to himself, “The Bai Clan was previously driven away from the royal capital, and yet now, it seems that their status is going to rise abruptly. The birthday celebration a few days later is certainly going to cause the atmosphere to be extremely lively.”

“Huh?” At this moment, Mustang froze. Because of the special characteristics of the Astral Soul he condensed, his sensory abilities were extremely sensitive towards Astral Energy. In this instance, he could somewhat sense that there was an immense amount of tyrannical Astral Energy descending from the heavens, focusing in on a location somewhere near the Bai Clan.

With but a slight intent, both of Mustang’s eyes underwent a transformation. Faint shadows of constellations orbiting appeared

in the pupils of his eyes, giving off the impression that he was capable of seeing through everything.

“Hu...” Mustang’s heart slightly shuddered. Based on this fluctuation of Astral Energy that he was sensing, it was highly possible that it belonged to a layer that was higher than the 3rd Layer of Heavens. Was there still another hidden talent in the Bai Clan? But why’d they only spread the news about Autumn Snow?

Mustang was puzzled by the actions of the Bai Clan, “It seems like I’ll have to make a trip personally down to the Bai Clan tonight.”

Qin Wentian didn’t know of Mustang’s existence, he was only concerned with increasing the level of his cultivation. Using the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, he unceasingly endured the pain to reforge his body, and finally, after suffering excruciating agony, a “Ka Cha” sound rang out from Qin Wentian’s body as his body underwent another transformation. A warm smile broke out on Qin Wentian’s face — he knew that he had just successfully broken through to the 4th level of the Body Refinement Realm! The initial three levels of the Body Refinement Realm referred to the refinement of his flesh and muscles, while the middle three levels referred to the refinement of energy channels and bones, and finally, the last three levels referred to the refinement of one’s inner organs.

By the time he’d completed his cultivation practice, night had already fallen. Countless thoughts arose in his mind as Qin Wentian left the training grounds and walked towards the front yard. Qin Wentian believed that, if he were to tell the truth to Bai Qingsong, based on his current achievements, Bai Qingsong would

immediately change his mind about the annulling of the marriage engagement. However, he didn't want to appear so cheap and inferior. Some matters, Qin Wentian believed, were enough to see a person's true colours. The only thing he wanted to know now, was the attitude of Autumn Snow. Through these three years since they had come to know each other, he had come to believe that she too would care for him.

“Three days later, at Bai Qingsong's birthday celebration, I must ask her personally.” Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. After which, he walked in the direction of the exit, only to see the two guards were still standing there, barring his path. As everyone knew that Qin Wentian was born with broken meridians, Bai Qingsong had no inclination to waste more manpower. Stationing two armed guards here was already thinking highly of Qin Wentian.

As the guards saw Qin Wentian's approach, one of them stood in his path, barring his path as the guard angrily stated, “F*ck off.”

“Oh, it seems like the dogs have learned how to bite.” Qin Wentian's visage turned cold. The words uttered by Qin Wentian caused the guard to freeze momentarily as shock suffused his features. Swiftly after, the guard's leered threateningly as a cruel smile appeared on his face, “It looks like our Young Master Qin was too used to living a carefree life, and has forgotten his current position. Since this is the case, let me WAKE YOU UP!”

Roaring in anger, the guard raised his fist as he rushed forward, aiming for the critical area of Qin Wentian's head region. The movement of the airflow, caused by the fist strikes of the guard,

was extremely overbearing.

Qin Wentian's reaction speed and senses were extremely keen. To the current him, who'd already stepped into the ranks of a Stellar Martial Cultivator, the speed of his opponent's strikes were so slow that it seemed laughable. Qin Wentian easily shifted his body to the side, dodging the strike, while advancing in the same moment, leaping up, and explosively using his knee to slam against his opponent's chest. In that instant, "Boom!", the internal organs of the guard shattered as the impact sent him flying away, as he collapsed on to the ground, far off in the distance, dead.

"What?" The remaining guard stared dumbstruck for a moment, before he recovered. Shrugging disdainfully as the guard thought to himself, "How weak was he? To think that he was caught unawares so easily by attacks from a trash." With a cold glint in his eye, the remaining guard gathered his strength as he struck out. Each of his punches punctured the air with an angry roar akin to that of a tiger. This was.. The basic fist technique, Ferocious Tiger Fist!

This time round, Qin Wentian did not chose to dodge. His fist, akin to that of a steel hammer, clashed directly with his opponent. "Ka Cha!" The sound of bones breaking rang out. Except, the broken fist belonged to that of the guard, shattered even before he had the time to let out a scream of terror. Not giving any chance for the guard to react, Qin Wentian's fist instantly landed on his opponent's head. However, at that instant, Qin Wentian retracted back his energy, merely knocking the guard unconscious instead of causing his head to explode.

After doing what needed to be done, Qin Wentian tossed both of their bodies inside the small house that was used for his imprisonment. After which, he stripped himself and swapped clothes with one of the guards, before exiting the courtyard and disappearing into the darkness.

After living here for three years, Qin Wentian was too familiar with the routine of the night patrol of the Bai Clan. He purposely chose those remote paths, evading the night patrols, and after an hour, he finally arrived at the main gate of the Bai Residence.

As his footsteps echoed out as he walked towards the gate, Qin Wentian couldn't help feeling slightly nervous. If, at this moment, he was caught by the Bai Clan, he knew that there was no way Bai Qingsong would let him off so easily.

As luck would have it, just as Qin Wentian stepped out of the main gate, he heard footsteps approaching from in front of him. Without a choice, he dipped his head lower making himself as inconspicuous as possible.

“Who are you? Why are you sneaking around. Incline your head.” A cold voice that was extremely familiar to him drifted to his ears, causing his heart to slightly shudder. Traces of a small smile appeared on his face. Were the Gods playing tricks on him? To think that they'd meet each other here.

Autumn Snow couldn't help but to tremble slightly as Qin Wentian inclined his head. Unconsciously, she retreated a small step back.

Time', momentarily paused, as the two of them look towards each other in silence. Qin Wentian from the start, had been observing the expressions of Bai Autumn Snow. From the slight panic, to a state of calm. He lightly smiled, yet he was feeling disappointment in his heart. It was as if he could read what Bai Autumn Snow was thinking.

"I... didn't have a choice." Bai Autumn Snow explained. Without saying anything, Qin Wentian silently looked at her. Never in his imaginations would he thought that such a scenario would occur between them.

"How many years have you wasted in study, regarding the condensation of Astral Souls, and yet, that is your limit. But what use was there? You could only be a secondary player, helping others to condense their Astral Soul. From the start, you were already destined to be lied to by me."

Bai Autumn Snow's headful of beautiful black hair danced about in the wind, accentuating her beauty. However, the Qin Wentian now didn't have any mood to admire that, for his heart went cold at the words of Bai Autumn Snow.

"So this is the reason why the Bai Clan repaid my gratitude with enmity?"

Autumn Snow did not answer his question, and replied, "Ye WuQue, at the age of 13, had already formed an innate link with a constellation from the 2nd Heavenly Layer, and condensed his first

Astral Soul. At the age of 15, he stepped into the Arterial Circulation Realm, and opened his 2nd Astral Gate, forming an innate link with a constellation from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, condensing his 2nd Astral Soul. And now, at the age of 18, his cultivation is already at the 8th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, with high hopes of stepping into the Yuanfu Realm before the age of 20. The distance between him and you, is as incomparable as the distance between the Heavens and Earth. How could you even begin to compare?”

Qin Wentian understood the meaning behind Autumn Snow’s words. The candidate selected for the marriage proposal this time round, was most likely Ye WuQue.

“You can leave. After all, no matter what, you did help me. I’m not someone who is so cold and unfeeling, and will not make things difficult for you. Even if you don’t die, there is no way you could affect the marriage between the Bai Clan and the Ye Clan. And in the future, both of us are already destined to be people belonging to different worlds.” After speaking, Autumn Snow lightly walked past Qin Wentian. At that moment, he couldn’t help but feel how unfamiliar Autumn Snow had become. Or maybe, this was who she truly was at the very beginning. He had only himself to blame for not being able to see through her facade.

“Autumn Snow.” Qin Wentian suddenly interjected, causing Autumn Snow to halt in her steps.

“Three years ago, your father Bai Qingsong was the one who initiated the marriage engagement with my Qin Clan. My foster father did not want to affect your future by agreeing, but yet,

under the desperate urgings of Bai Qingsong, he gradually acquiesced.”

“In these three years, my foster father did all he could for your Bai Clan, providing cultivation resources, aiding the Bai Clan in their attempts to rebuild themselves, and never once has he been haughty or overbearing, lording it over the Bai Clan. And for me, in turn, I’ve long regarded you all as my kin.”

“Five days ago, I aided you in the condensation of your Astral Soul, and yet, your Bai Clan, actually wanted to kill me. Now that you say you’ll let me leave and not make things difficult for me, this is nothing but a joke. This is not you repaying the kindness owed, but sarcasm instead.

Every word of Qin Wentian was filled with indifference as he slowly walked away, “But you are right, from the start, you and me, was destined to be people belonging to different worlds.”

AGM 006 – Emperor Star Academy

The Qin Residence was located to the north of the Sky Harmony City. The distance between the Qin and Bai Residence consisted of about a 100 Li. After Qin Wentian departed from the Bai Clan, he swiftly travelled through the night. It was already daytime when he'd arrived back at the Qin Residence.

After embarking onto the path of cultivation, Qin Wentian's constitution had naturally strengthened. As evidenced by the fact that he didn't feel any sense of exhaustion, despite walking for an entire night.

Just outside the Qin Residence's entrance, there was a carved, towering sculpture of the Qin Clan's Ancestor, Qin Wu, grasping a battle lance in his hands, whilst riding atop a mighty warhorse.

Qin Wu was the supreme commander-in-chief, wielding the might of the Chu Country's army. His famous name resounded forth in all directions, as his brilliant achievements in war led him to achieve astounding military merits. For his country Qin Wu didn't hesitate to rush into the battlefield, using his body as a shield, saving the emperor from the clutches of the enemies. But after the emperor consolidated his power, and after he passed away, his successive generations, out of fear of the authority Qin Wu wielded, banished the Qin Clan to the north of the empire, to be stationed in the Sky Harmony City, far away from the centre of power. And as time passed, the authority the Qin Clan wielded got weaker with each successive generation.

Looking at the sculpture of Qin Wu, Qin Wentian couldn't help

but to let out a bitter laugh. There was indeed some similarities between both their stories.

Taking a step forward as he entered the Qin Residence, Qin Wentian noticed a number of people rushing towards a location. Curiosity burning in his heart, he stopped a passing maid as he asked, "What happened?"

"Ahh, Young Master Wentian, the Qin Clan's young miss and young master who went to the royal capital academies just returned home yesterday. Clan Master will be inspecting their cultivation at the training grounds today. After all, it has been a year since they were back."

The Chu Country, had a history of 3,000 years, with vast lands and over a hundred cities, with a population of one trillion people. Among all the cities, the Chu Royal Capital was the most prosperous — not only was it the centre of authority, it was also a holy land for cultivation. Almost everyone in the Country of Chu, especially the powerful clans, would send their young talents to the royal capital in hopes of joining one of the many prestigious martial academies and colleges.

The Qin Clan, was obviously not an exception. In the same generation as Qin Wentian, there were three others who were the future of the Qin Clan. In order to maximise their potential and to increase their level of cultivation, the three of them enrolled in the various prestigious martial academies in the royal capital.

"I wonder what their cultivation levels are, now that they've returned back from the Chu Capital." Qin Wentian murmured, as

he walked towards the direction of the training grounds.

When Qin Wentian arrived at the training grounds, he could that see those elders with a certain level of authority were already there. And atop the arena, there were crackling sounds akin to that of wind and thunder, where two youths were already in the midst of sparring.

“Qin Zhi.” Qin Wentian glanced at one of the two youths who was wearing a yellow robe. Qin Zhi was the same age as Qin Wentian, and as Qin Wentian spectated the sparring session, he could see that Qin Zhi had no trouble winning. A fist, accompanied by the roar of a raging tiger, struck out. The might of the fist was akin to that of when a ferocious tiger was hunting it’s prey, the boundless might displayed caused the entire mountain to shake. The youth whom Qin Zhi was sparring against, was sent flying out of the arena, as an explosive, thunderous sound rang out, his body landing heavily beneath the arena.

“The name of this fist technique – Ferocious Tiger Leaving the Mountains — is even more terrifying than when compared to a real tiger. From my estimates, Qin Zhi should have already reached the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm.” Qin Wentian deduced, after he sensed the might emanated from that strike. A Martial Cultivator, at the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm, would have the strength equivalent to that of 49 bulls, with fists even tougher than that of steel.

Qin Zhi was a Stellar Martial Cultivator. The Astral Soul he condensed was the Valiant Tiger Constellation, with the special characteristics of increased strength. When complemented with

the Tiger Roar Fist Technique, his might was nothing to sneeze at.

“Not too shabby. To think that Qin Zhi already possesses such a level of strength. However, when compared to brother Qin Shang and sister Qin Yao, his talent is still somewhat lacking. One year ago, sister Qin Yao had already stepped into the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm. Right now, her cultivation level must be even more astounding.”

Qin Wentian's eyes flashed as he silently added, “Moreover, this was just the strength one will possess when in the Body Refinement Realm. If one ever breaks through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, the whole potential of the human body would be ignited, as the boundless energy rotates in constant circulation, causing the martial techniques executed to display godly might, and divine strength. How tyrannical would that be.”

“Wentian!” At this moment, a voice drifted over, and following that, the gazes of people who were spectating the fight, turned and riveted their gazes upon Qin Wentian. The one who spoke, was none other than his foster father, Qin Chuan.

“Wentian, why are you back?” Qin Chuan's dignified and stern expression softened as a gentle smile broke out on his face

“Foster father.” Qin Wentian, had so many things he wanted to say, but at that moment, he was somewhat bowled over by memories of the past. From the time he was a kid, Uncle Black had escorted him all the way to the Qin Clan, and the Clan Lord, Qin Chuan had adopted him. Throughout all this years, the love shown towards Qin Wentian, was not any worse off compared to that of

his own blood children

“Just as I expected, after Autumn Snow formed her innate link with a constellation from the 3rd Heavenly Layer and condensed her Astral Soul, word of her shocking talent spread out across the Chu Country. You must have been driven out of the Bai Clan, am I right?” A voice beside Qin Chuan sneered. This person was the younger paternal cousin of Qin Chuan, the man with the second highest authority in the Qin Clan, Qin He.

“Silence.” Qin Chuan coldly berated.

“Elder brother, you refuse to believe my words. Now that the Bai Clan and the Ye Clan from the royal capital have such intimate connections, there were even people who said that the young genius Ye WuQue from the Ye Clan has already proposed a marriage agreement, seeking to marry Bai Autumn Snow. Do you think the Bai Clan would still honor the marriage agreement between them and us?” Qin He laughed coldly, causing the nearby spectators to have various looks of interest and conflict reflected on their faces.

At this moment, the sound of a flute originated from the sky. The expressions of the surrounding people momentarily froze as they inclined their heads, searching the skies for the source of the sound. Only to see that, soaring through the skies, in the middle of the air, was a man who wore a yellow robe standing on a huge eagle.

Qin Chuan slightly creased his brows, how dare this person be so rude, to ride a eagle and soar through the air space of my Qin

Residence.

“Teacher!” At this moment, a voice belonging to a female youth cried out. Qin Chuan glanced at the girl who was standing beside him as he asked, “Yao`er, he’s your teacher?”

“Right.” Qin Yao nodded her head, before saying, “Teacher, why has your esteemed self decided to visit my Qin Residence today? Please join me at the seat of honour.”

“Yao`er, I heard that there was a marriage agreement between the Qin Clan and the Bai Clan’s Autumn Snow, is this matter true?” The yellow-robed middle age man asked.

Qin Yao hesitated for a short moment, but eventually answered, “Yes, this is true.”

As she finished her sentence, the huge eagle swooped down from the skies, and landed onto the arena. The yellow-robed man smiled coldly and stated, “The reason I am here today is precisely because of this matter, I heard of Autumn Snow’s astounding talent, and am here to extend an invitation for her to join the Royal Academy of the Chu Country.”

This simple statement gave a huge shock to the spectators gathered in the training grounds. The current Autumn Snow had transformed into a phoenix among humans with but a single leap. Even the prestigious Royal Academy of the Chu Country had personally sent out an invitation for her. One must know that, despite the immense size of the Qin Clan, only Qin Yao had a high

enough talent to qualify for her enrolment into the Royal Academy.

“Even if the academy wished to recruit Autumn Snow, there is no need for esteemed teacher to personally deliver the letter. Couldn’t the academy just sent the invitation via courier?” Qin Yao curiously asked.

“Qin Yao, it’s different this time round, to think that the first Astral Soul condensed by Autumn Snow was actually from a constellation in the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Not only the Royal Academy, the other prestigious academies of the Royal Capital were also notified of this. They too, sent out their personnel to personally extend their invitation to her. And thus, all the academies came to a conclusion, We might as well arrange for a recruitment drive in the Sky Harmony City. The location will be at the Bai Clan, two days later.”

“Hmm, on the day of Bai Qingsong’s birthday, at the Bai Clan.” Qin Yao furrowed her brow. This birthday celebration was obviously just a facade.

“Correct. The birthday celebration is secondary, the crucial point is the recruitment of Autumn Snow. I received news that even the Emperor Star Academy was tempted, and has sent someone to the Sky Harmony City. And thus, I didn’t dare to be careless.”

“Haha, Talon, since you already knew that my Emperor Star Academy was extending our invitation, why are you still here wasting your time?” At this moment, a voice brimming with carefree laughter drifted over. Talon’s expression turned frosty, as

he turned his head towards the direction of the voice.

“Mustang!” Talon bared his teeth in a cold smile. To think that Mustang would have the same idea as him, planning on using the knowledge of the relations between the Qin Clan and Bai Clan to recruit Autumn Snow. Despite this, Talon wasn’t worried. After all, Qin Yao was his personal disciple. In terms of relations, he was one level above Mustang.

“Brother Qin, long time no see, how is Uncle Qin’s health these days.” Mustang walked forward, as he addressed Qin Chuan.

The Uncle Qin which Mustang was referring to, was the son of the supreme commander-in-chief, Qin Wu. Qin Wu was also the father of the current clan lord, Qin Chuan. When the Qin Ancestor was still alive, both father and son had stormed the battlefields. After the previous emperor passed away, the Qin Clan lost most of their authority as they were banished to the Sky Harmony City.

(TL: Both the Qin Ancestor and his son was named Qin Wu. Same pronunciation but different meaning.)

“Thank you for Brother Mustang’s concern, my father is doing well, just that it is difficult for him to walk, and as such, didn’t come out to personally welcome you.” Although the exterior of Qin Chuan was smiling, inwardly, he was feeling apprehensive in his heart. Mustang was the representative from the Emperor Star Academy. To think that even he had personally come forth for the recruitment of Autumn Snow... It seemed like there was really no more hope of saving the marriage engagement between Autumn Snow and Wentian.

“Mustang, Autumn Snow can only join my Royal Academy.” Talon glared at the representative from the Emperor Star Academy, as hints of challenge could be heard from his voice.

“Is that so?” Mustang laughed, before he took a seat. His gaze, swept across the entirety of the spectators gathered in the training grounds before landing on Qin Wentian. When he snuck into the Bai Clan’s Residence yesterday night, hoping to find out the genius they were hiding was, to his surprise, he accidentally discovered something interesting. There was actually someone running away from the Bai Clan. Out of curiosity, he followed the youth all the way to the Qin’s Residence.

“And here, I was thinking that the Bai Clan was hiding an expert of the Yuanfu Realm. Never would I have imagined that “the expert” was actually this youth in front of me. Based on the pressure and fluctuations of the Astral Energy which I sensed, his talent is certainly not below that of Autumn Snow.” Mustang silently intoned. It seemed like this time round, he didn’t make a wasted trip.

At this moment, the spectators all sighed in their hearts. The Royal Academy would only accept clan members of the Royal Clan or people with astounding talents. Among all the academies of the Royal Capital, it was ranked in the top three.

As for the Emperor Star Academy, their criteria for recruitment was even stricter, they would only accept Stellar Martial Cultivators. And every student who enrolled in the Emperor Star Academy, would graduate with a cultivation level of at least the

Yuanfu Realm without fail.

The Yuanfu realm was the realm above that of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Yuanfu Realm cultivators had a Yuan Palace established within their bodies, with unimaginable strength — far beyond that of the Arterial Circulation Realm — and were able to draw on the essence of Heaven and Earth, even hovering in the air, and flying through the skies.

The cultivators of the Yuanfu Realm, were all terrifying existences that could wipe out the Sky Harmony City with a flick of their finger.

To think that now, representatives from both the Royal Academy and even the Emperor Star Academy, would come to the Qin Residence, all because of Autumn Snow.

AGM 007 – Iron Bond Between Father And Son

Talon thought that the reason for Mustang's presence at the Qin Clan was the same as his. And as such, he couldn't help but to feel a slight sense of pressure. Turning to Qin Yao, he asked, "Yao'er, who's the lucky guy that had the marriage engagement with Autumn Snow?"

"This..." An reluctant look appeared on Qin Yao's face, as her beautiful eyes flicked towards Qin Wentian before she replied, "Teacher, this matter... I'm afraid to say that something unexpected occurred."

"Huh? Something unexpected?" Talon froze.

Qin Wentian glanced at Qin Chuan, as if seeking for help as she stood there awkwardly. She too had only heard the vague rumors, but had not ascertained what was the truth yet. And thus, she didn't dare to inform Talon, for fear of misleading her esteemed teacher.

"Wentian, come over here." Qin Chuan beckoned to Qin Wentian. After Qin Wentian arrived by his side, Qin Chuan began addressing the two representatives of the prestigious academies, "Brother Mustang, Brother Talon, this is my son, Qin Wentian. The one with the marriage engagement with Bai Autumn Snow, is him precisely. The circumstances surrounding my son are somewhat special, despite him having godsent talent, he was unable to cultivate. Dear brothers, based on your immense amounts of experiences, do you think there are any solution for my

son?

“Big brother, he was born with crippled meridians, what bullsh*t godsent talent?” Qin He interjected.

“Silence. Wentian was not born with crippled meridians, it was caused by an accident. His talent and sensory abilities towards the Astral Constellations are both immeasurably high.” Qin Chuan berated, as anger suffused his features. At this moment, both Talon and Mustang narrowed their eyes, as if they understood something. Though their actions might be the same, the thoughts behind the actions were not similar.

“Let me take a look.” Both Mustang and Talon said at the same time. As they extended each of their hands and placed them upon each wrist of Qin Wentian.

“Indeed, a human with broken meridians.” Talon’s heart shuddered slightly with disappointment as a nasty look reflected on his visage. Withdrawing his hands, he lightly laughed and stated “What a waste of my time, I expected a dragon to be matched with the phoenix, but to think that the dragon was a snake instead.”

Qin Chuan’s pupils contracted as his countenance turned cold. “You, your words, they seem a little inappropriate. You better watch what you say.”

“Hmm?” After Talon heard how Qin Chuan rebutted him, killing intent appeared in his eyes. How insolent. The authority of the Qin

Clan diminished with each generation. Were it not for the talent of Autumn Snow and Qin Yao, he would never have stepped into the Qin Residence. To think that a has-been dared to use such a tone when addressing him.

Suppressing his anger, Talon let out a sarcastic laugh, “Qin Chuan, look at how pathetic the Qin Clan is now. Stop your foolish daydreams and face reality.”

“If you have nothing else to add, get out of here.” Qin Chuan said coldly. This made Qin Yao felt as if she was sandwiched between a rock and a hardplace. “Teacher, my dad has always been impulsive, please don’t take it to heart.”

“Qin Yao, this father of yours, he lacks proper understanding of the current state of affairs.” Talon said icily.

“Yao`er, in the future, you are not to acknowledge this person as your teacher.” Qin Chuan interjected, causing Qin Yao to turn pale with fright. Anger apparent on his features, Talon muttered “Excellent. Very good!”

Looking at these proceedings unfolding before him, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but feel a stab of guilt to his heart. All this while, for the sake of him, Qin Chuan had knowingly offended many people. And now, he had even caused Qin Chuan to have a falling out with the esteemed teacher of Qin Yao.

However, the thoughts of Mustang travelled down a totally different path compared to Talon. Glancing at Qin Wentian,

Mustang let out a slight smile before asking, “Brother Qin, when was it that his meridians were crippled?”

“When he was 6.” Qin Chuan replied, “Initially, we thought that the accident was a one-off occurrence. Who would have thought that there were intermittent effects, as the intensity increased overtime, and ultimately leading to all the pathways of his meridians getting destroyed.”

“6 years old.” Mustang breathed. Staring intently at Qin Wentian, he withdrew his hand. If what he guessed was right... “What frightening tenacity, what frightening willpower.”

Thinking of Talon’s earlier display, Mustang couldn’t help but to sneer disdainfully. What a foolish boor.

“Dang, dang, dang.” At this moment, all the spectators could feel the earth tremble beneath their feet, as the sound of horses galloping could be heard. The members of the Qin Clan all had expressions ranging from shock, rage, and astonishment on their faces. Who would dare to ride their horses, and barge into the Qin Clan?

Very quickly, they could see a warrior wielding a long spear in his hand, mounted on a war horse, galloping in their direction. Other than being equipped with armor, this warrior had a long black cloak that seemed to gleam with a dim light, fluttering along with the movements of the wind. His gaze, was as sharp as sword, emitting a chilly air.

“Icehawk.” The pupils of Qin Chuan widened in hatred. To think that his Qin Residence would be such a popular place today. Icehawk, was the vice general under his father back during the days when they had fought for the country. His personality was sinister and ruthless, and always had disagreements with Qin Wu. After that, he defected to the Ye Clan, and using his knowledge gained from the time they were working together, relentlessly suppressed the Qin Clan.

“Young Master, long time no see.” Icehawk replied, looking straight at Qin Chuan. The gaze of Icehawk was akin to that of an actual hawk eyeing its prey.

“Icehawk, you actually dared to storm the Qin Residence with so many people. It seems like you’re truly getting more and more unruly.” Qin Chuan coldly exclaimed as killing intent surged in his eyes.

Icehawk didn’t even put Qin Chuan’s words in his eyes — the Qin Clan now was no longer the Qin Clan of the past. A crippled tiger, how could Icehawk fear it? He was the one working in the shadows, pulling strings to influence the major powers into suppressing the Qin Clan. But as long as Qin Wu was still alive, he still had some fear of clashing directly with the Qin Clan. Well, it didn’t matter to him, who suppressed the Qin Clan, as long as the Qin Clan was suppressed.

“There are two reason why I’m here today. First, is to respectfully inquire about the health of my previous respected commander. Second, I’m here to tell the Qin Clan that two days later, representatives from the Chu Country will all be invited to

the Bai Clan, where Autumn Snow will join one of the prestigious academies from the Royal Capital. That, and the matter regarding the marriage engagement between the Bai Clan and the Qin Clan, can be settled then. I truly hope that the Qin Clan will be there, and not hide in the Qin Residence like a cowardly rat. If not... don't blame me for being ruthless." Icehawk leered threateningly.

After saying what he wanted to say, Icehawk mounted onto his warhorse before galloping in the direction of the exit. Just as he was galloping away, one could hear his cold laughter resounding out loud in the distance, while his eyes stared daggers at Qin Chuan.

The members of Qin Clan all stared at the silhouette far off in the horizon, while Qin Chuan was shaking from anger. If Autumn Snow was enrolled into the Emperor Star Academy, the Bai Clan could jolly well use this as an excuse to annul the marriage agreement. Because if that really happened, everyone would think that this was to be expected. After all, a trash like Qin Wentian who was unable to cultivate, would never be worthy enough to marry Autumn Snow. If they persisted, the Qin Clan would only be humiliated.

"The Bai Clan, how overbearing." Qin Chuan had never expected that the Bai Clan would repay his kindness with enmity. He truly wanted to see with his own eyes what the Bai Clan would say two days later.

"So this is the reason." Talon coldly smiled. "Qin Chuan, I will just wait for your Qin Clan to be embarrassed. Farewell."

After he finished speaking, Talon lept to the top of the huge eagle, after which, the huge eagle intentionally circled around the Qin Residence as if it was mocking them, before soaring away through the skies.

Silence descended, as all the members of the Qin Clan had ugly looks on their face. Never had they faced such a grave humiliation before.

“Big brother,” Qin He suddenly stated, “the situation is against us. As you can see, both the Bai Clan and the Ye Clan are joining forces against our Qin Clan. Two days later, we shouldn’t attend. If we do, all our face and prestige will be wiped clean.”

“You mean I should stay in the Qin Residence just like a cowardly rat?” Qin Chuan coldly interjected.

“All these years, Qin Wentian has squandered our clan’s cultivation resources, wasting the valuable Yuan Meteor Stones we had, and I have never spoken a word in protest. But however, now, this thing concerns the hope and future of our Qin Clan. I suggest we kick him out. After all, taking good care of him all this years, we have already done more than we were supposed to.” Qin He lowly intoned.

It seems that there were many members of the Qin Clan who were opposed to Qin Wentian. Taking into account that Qin Wentian was someone with broken meridians and was unable to cultivate, they felt that Qin Chuan expended too much effort on just a foster son, overly pampering Qin Wentian.

“Third Brother, what do you think?” Qin Chuan motioned to another elder that was standing next to Qin He. This person was the 3rd son of Qin Wu, Qin Ye.

“Qin Wentian, he should just live an ordinary life.” Qin Ye concurred with Qin He.

Qin Chuan silently contemplated for a moment, sweeping his gaze through the members of the Qin Clan before saying, “Back in the days, our ancestor enjoyed the grace and kindness of the former emperor. To repay that, our ancestor participated in over 80 great battles, and suffered critical injuries 18 times. Back when the Alliance of the 10 countries trapped the emperor, without any regards to his own life, using his own body as a shield, Ancestor Qin travelled 1,000 miles in a single day, frenziedly slaughtering his way out of the encirclement, rescuing the former emperor. When they both returned back to the safety of Chu Country, our ancestor didn’t even ask for a single reward. How heroic was he.”

“To think that now, my Qin Clan has really degenerated. Just because of a little pressure, most of you want to abandon the descendant of our Qin Clan’s benefactor, severing all ties, and cast him out of the Qin Clan. Just the very thought of it, causes me to feel endless disgust. If our Ancestor were to know of this, he would surely turn in his grave.

“My decision is this. The Qin Clan shall live or die together with Qin Wentian. Two days later, summon all our available troops to accompany us as we go to the Bai Clan. If there is one more word about abandoning Wentian, no matter who the person is, I will kill

him myself.”

After that, Qin Chuan slammed his palms down onto the stone chair, causing it to disintegrate into pieces. While the members of the Qin Clan glanced down at their feet, not daring to look him in the eye or make any sounds in protest.

The voice of Qin Chuan permeated the whole of the training grounds, while he stood erect. When looking at him, one would feel as if they could witness the valiantness and heroism that was exhibited by their ancestor.

“Just what did Qin Wentian’s ancestors do for our Qin Clan? To think that the clan leader would actually act this way.” The other members of the Qin Clan didn’t know the exact reason. They only knew that Qin Chuan was repaying a debt of gratitude.

And for this debt of gratitude, Qin Chuan would unhesitatingly sacrifice himself if need be. This sort of unbending love, and spirit of valiantness, caused respect to bloom in their hearts, as everyone too, seemed to unconsciously stood up straighter, as respect straightened their spine.

“Wentian, you needn’t bother regarding this matter. Foster father will seek justice for you.” The reply of Qin Chuan was tinged with gentleness.

Qin Wentian sighed in his heart. Initially, he wanted to inform Qin Chuan, after becoming a Stellar Martial Cultivator. But to think that now, even before he got the chance to do so, the entire

Qin Clan would be affected.

Qin Wentian did not know the story about the circumstances behind his birth, nor did he understand the debt of gratitude owed by the Qin Clan to his parents. He only knew that he had to repay the gratitude shown towards him by Qin Chuan no matter how difficult it was in this lifetime.

Qin Chuan was stunned into silence. On the training grounds, it could be seen that Qin Wentian had both knees upon the ground, as he looked at Qin Chuan, saying, "Foster father, this matter arose because of me, I will settle it myself, so there's no need for the Qin Clan to be involved. The Bai Clan, even if they humiliate me a thousand times, I'd be fine with it, but as long as the matter involves the prestige of the Qin Clan, there's no way that I'd agree to it. This matter, I will take sole responsibility for it."

"Father." Qin Wentian shouted, as he knelt down heavily onto the ground, kowtowing.

Only by kneeling, could Qin Wentian fully express the gratitude towards Qin Chuan he felt in his heart.

Qin Chuan slowly approached Qin Wentian, as he helped him to his feet. As their gaze crossed, both of them had a smile broken out upon their faces. This time around, in Qin Wentian's speech, he no longer referred to Qin Chuan as his foster father. He referred Qin Chuan as his father instead!.

"I have always believed in you son. One day, you will definitely

be able to accomplish things that others never would before.” Qin Chuan look at Qin Wentian with determination apparent in his gaze.

Standing at the side, with laughter suffusing his features, Mustang beamed. In comparison to Autumn Snow, he preferred the youth standing in front of him 10 times more. Godly talent, a frightening amount of tenacity, combined together with an iron will of determination — there was no doubt that in the future, the youth before him would definitely amount to great things.

It seemed like, two days later, during the gathering of the powers in the Bai Clan, there would be a good show to watch!

AGM 008 – Brother & Sister

Qin Wentian had yet to reveal the fact to Qin Chuan that he'd already condensed his Astral Soul. He believed that the appropriate time to reveal that, would be two days later — during the time when he was seeking redress for the humiliation suffered earlier. Qin Chuan would be much happier then.

“Brother Qin, I wish to closely monitor your son's unique condition. I wonder if Brother Qin is willing?” During this moment, Mustang moved forward, as a strange light flashed through his eyes when he looked at Qin Wentian.

“If Brother Mustang is willing, there is nothing I could wish for more.” Qin Chuan quickly agreed. One must know that the level of power wielded by the Emperor Star Academy was so great, to the extent that they could disregard the authority of the imperial royal clan.

Many years ago, the reigning powers in the Country of Chu, were jealous and worried of the immense power wielded by the Emperor Star Academy, and as such, the Royal Academy was formed, with the intention of suppressing the Emperor Star Academy.

“Qin Wentian, follow me please.” Mustang beckoned Qin Wentian to follow him to the side. Qin Chuan too, motioned to Qin Yao, who was standing beside him, “Yao`er, you go too.”

Qin Yao silently agreed, as she turned to follow behind the two of them.

Qin Wentian, noticing the way Mustang stared at him, could barely suppress his shock. “This person... His Astral Soul might be that of the Heavenly Vision Constellation.” Astral light could be seen flickering from the pupils of Mustang’s eyes as his pupils took on the shape of constellations orbiting.

“One with broken meridians, yet able to cultivate.” Mustang lightly said, causing Qin Wentian to be thunderstruck. As he expected, the Heavenly Vision Astral Soul was able to see through the pressure and fluctuations of the Astral Energy in his body.

“Never would I have expected that today, I would meet someone who was able to condense an Astral Soul with a set of broken meridians.” Mustang felt an unexpected joy in his heart. After he inspected Qin Wentian previously, he could confirm that Qin Wentian’s meridians were crippled indeed, but at the same time, with the aid of the Heavenly Vision Constellation, he could also tell that, without a doubt, Qin Wentian had already successfully evolved into a Stellar Martial Cultivator. This left only one possibility — breaking the old before re-establishing the new. In order to recast a perfect set of energy channels and meridians, one had no choice but to first destroy their previously flawed foundation, before they could even attempt to recast this unique set of meridians from the legends – the Stellar Meridians! Although this was only the embryonic form of the legendary Stellar Meridians, it’s ability to accommodate and adjust the Astral Energy within one’s body was already far beyond that of cultivators with normal meridians.

This person, regardless of the cost... he must recruit him to the Emperor Star Academy!

“Elder, do you have any instructions for me?” Qin Wentian asked as he looked at Mustang.

“Based on the strength of the Astral Pressure fluctuations from your body, your cultivation level should’ve already broken through to the 5th level of the Body Refinement Realm, right?”

“What a terrifying vision, although my actual cultivation level is only at the 4th level of the Body Refinement Realm, because of the Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer I condensed, the Astral Energy within me is tyrannical beyond compare, and thus, there’s a lapse in his judgement.” Qin Wentian kept silent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

“Two days later, when representatives of all the powers are gathered at the Bai Residence, there are bound to be many academies seeking for disciples to enroll and undoubtedly, there will be many tests and examinations. Although your talent is unsurpassed and of the highest degree, your current strength is still insufficient. Here, I have something for you. Two days later, I hope to see you there at the Bai Residence.” After ending the conversation, Mustang took out a manual and a Yuan Meteor Stone and passed it to Qin Wentian. After which, he lept through the air, flying through the skies as he bid goodbye.

Qin Wentian’s vision focused on Mustang, as he stared in awe. His body movement technique had actually reached the realm of being as light as a swallow, soaring through the skies. This was an obvious indicator that Mustang was a cultivator at the terrifying Yuanfu Realm. “One day, I swear, I too will soar through the

heavens.”

Looking at the items in his hand, his pupils contracted, as his heart slightly shivered with excitement. This stone he held, had an immense amount of Astral Energy stored within it — it was an extremely valuable cultivation resource, the Yuan Meteor Stone. And as for the manual, there were only three big words written there – Subduing Dragon Fist

“Emperor Star Academy.” Qin Wentian silently murmured in his heart. At this moment, footsteps could be heard as the shadow of a body appeared next to him, along with a fragrance that drifted with the wind.

“I’ve told you long ago, Bai Qingsong is a sly old fox. That’s why I was opposed to the marriage engagement earlier, but you proceeded on anyway, lusting for ravishing women, captivated by a lovely vision, losing yourself in the beauty of ‘Autumn Snow.” a gentle voice rang out teasingly.

Traces of a smile could be seen from Qin Wentian face. As his gaze shifted to the side, an incomparably beautiful face appeared before him. Her brows were comparable to the splendor of a crescent moon, with laughter in her eyes... that fair jade-like face with exquisite features, her skin that was so silky smooth and tender that it seemed that it would be damaged by the slightest touch, capable of invoking uncontrollable lust in men as they involuntary wished to kiss her... Qin Yao had the same status as Autumn Snow. She was one of the four great beauties in the Sky Harmony City, someone at the epitome of beauty.

“If I was what you said, lusting for beautiful woman, I would just cling to Sister Qin Yao everyday.” Qin Wentian laughed in reply.

“Stop your nonsense.” Qin Yao slightly berated, as she continued on saying, “You drove a wedge between father and my esteemed teacher, how will I continue to survive when I return back to the Royal Academy? How are you going to compensate me for that.”

Qin Wentian, withdrew the Yuan Meteor Stone which he had kept in his robes earlier, and passed it over to Qin Yao, laughingly stating, “The Astral Energy contained within this Yuan Meteor Stone is exceedingly strong, the fluctuations seem to indicate that it originated from the 2nd Layer of Heavens — you can have it.”

Qin Yao gazed at Qin Wentian and sighed, “Every time Father gifted you with Yuan Meteor stones, you would always stealthily pass them to me. Now that I have already broken through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, how could I still bear to receive the stones from you.”

As she thought of the past, the gaze of Qin Yao visibly softened. Although Qin Wentian had indeed caused a wedge to be driven between her esteemed teacher and Qin Chuan, there was no way she would have blamed him. Ever since young, this little brother of hers had always assisted her with her cultivation. Whenever their father gifted Yuan Meteor Stones to him, Qin Wentian would always unconditionally passed them to her, forbidding her from revealing so. If it wasn't for her little brother, how would she even have the cultivation level she had today.

“The Arterial Circulation Realm!” Qin Wentian joyfully

exclaimed. “Okay then, this time around, I shall keep this Yuan Meteor Stone instead.”

After all, there was only two days remaining. It was imperative that he raise his current level of strength quickly, through the aid of the Yuan Meteor Stone.

“Wentian, don’t bother so much about people like the Bai Clan. I am well acquainted with plenty of beautiful girls in the Royal Capital. In the future when there is a chance, let me introduce some of them to you.” Qin Yao consoled him.

Only now did Qin Wentian know the actual reason why Qin Yao had followed behind him and Mustang. It was to offer consolation, as she was worried that this matter of the marriage engagement would heavily affect him.

Qin Wentian stopped his steps as he squatted down, causing Qin Yao to be bewildered. Looking at Qin Wentian, she couldn’t help but ask, “What are you doing?”

“Come up.” Qin Wentian laughed, gesturing to his back.

“Come up your head!” Qin Yao hastily replied, as tinge of redness could be seen blushing on her cheeks. Rolling her eyes at Qin Wentian, she ignored him.

“What’s the matter pretty girl? Everyday when we were young, you would climb up on my back, ordering me to piggy back you.

Now that we're both adults, it seems like you no longer want me as your brother." Qin Wentian continued to tease her laughingly, causing Qin Yao to stamp her foot on the ground. This fellow, here he was dragging up embarrassing things from the past again.

Qin Yao was slightly older than Qin Wentian, and she was almost 17 this year. Now that she had grown up, slender and elegant, and as pure as a jade, how could she not be embarrassed when Qin Wentian wanted to piggyback her around just like the times when they were both kids. But even so, she still hopped up onto his back, with her hands clasping securely on Qin Wentian's shoulders as she gazed around, shyness apparent in her eyes.

"Okay, let's go." Qin Wentian's hands were supporting the back of Qin Yao's thighs — it felt like a soft bundle of cotton was resting behind his back — causing him to laugh as he stated, "Sister Qin Yao has really grown up."

Rolling her eyes as she bit her lips, Qin Yao extended her hands and twisted the ear of Qin Wentian. "How dare you continue teasing me." Although they weren't real blood siblings, the relationship between both of them had been extremely close.

"Seems like I was worried for nothing." Qin Yao lightly said, realizing that this little brat didn't even seem to be the slightest bit affected by the annulling of the marriage engagement between him and Autumn Snow.

As the two of them joked about, they soon arrived at one of the courtyards of Qin Chuan's residence. Qin Chuan's residence could be split into two courtyards, the eastern courtyard and the western

courtyard. Qin Chuan, his wife, as well as Qin Yao, were residing in the eastern courtyard, while Qin Wentian and his Uncle Black, were residing in the western one.

At this moment, in the courtyard, there was a woman whose features greatly resembled Qin Yao, so well maintained that it looked like she was only in her late twenties. Upon seeing Qin Wentian piggybacking Qin Yao, a warm smile blossomed on her face.

“Yao er, you are already all grown up, yet you still like to stick to Wentian.” Mother Qin knew that Qin Yao was older than Qin Wentian, but the scene of Wentian piggybacking Qin Yao made it seem as though Qin Wentian was her older brother instead.

“Mother, no, this fellow is taking advantage of me!” Qin Yao pouted as she got off the back of Qin Wentian.

“Taking advantage? What advantages do you have left that was not already taken by Wentian?” Mother Qin gently smiled, causing Qin Wentian to bashfully turn his head as he got back up from his half-squatting position.

“Mother!” Qin Yao speechlessly stomped her foot on the ground.

“Mother, I shall go and visit Uncle Black now.” From the way Qin Yao was glaring at him, Qin Wentian could tell that Qin Yao was embarrassed and thus, he took the hint to leave.

After he arrived at the Western Courtyard, he saw an feeble and decrepit figure sweeping the courtyard. This decrepit figure was missing an arm and a leg, with a bent body posture, appearing to be of extreme old age.

“Uncle Black, let me take over from you.” Qin Wentian walked forward, and at this moment, as the old man turned his head, as he gazed at Qin Wentian before asking, “You condensed your Astral Soul?”

Qin Wentian calmly nodded his head, he was not surprised that Uncle Black would be able to tell.

“Which Heavenly Layer? What type of Constellation?” Uncle Black continued asking.

“5th Heavenly Layer, the Heavenly Hammer Constellation.”

The decrepit frame of Uncle Black’s body slightly shuddered, before swiftly recovering. After that, he turned his back and continued walking to the backyard, not saying anything.

Qin Wentian silently followed Uncle Black to the training grounds located in the backyard, only to see that Uncle Black sitting on a stone bench, looking at him. “Throughout all these years, I was the one that forced you to shatter your meridians, causing you to endure unimaginable pain, even disallowing you from absorbing the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, and refusing to let you condense your Astral Soul back then. Do you hate me?”

“Uncle Black, ever since I was young, I had already understood your kind intentions. If I absorbed the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth, it would cause my sensory abilities to diminish, and if I formed an innate link with a Constellation early, when my sensory abilities had not yet been heightened through practice of meditation, How could the current me be able to condense an Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer?” Qin Wentian replied, smiling as he continued, “only by accumulating sufficient strength from meditation, was I able to appropriately raise my sensory strength. Self-destruction of my meridians was not a disaster, but a blessing instead.”

“Humans are all greedy by nature, seeking rapid advancement in a moment, absorbing the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, concurrently cultivating while attempting to sense the Astral Energies from the Astral Rivers in the Nine Heavenly Layers to condense their Astral Souls. What they didn’t realise was that the absorption of Yuan Qi from the Heaven and Earth would bury their talent in sensing of the Astral Energies. After many years of meditation, results have already been shown, since you’ve already condensed your Astral Soul. From today onwards, I will not bother about your cultivation methods, but you have to remember one thing. That is, never, ever, to absorb the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth. Only then, will the Astral Qi in your body be pure enough to enable you to open the Astral Gates and condense your Astral Souls in the future.”

Qin Wentian acquiesced his head in agreement as he stated, “Wentian will remember it well.”

After all, this world was a world that was dictated by the mightiest of Stellar Martial Cultivators

AGM 009 – Dragon Subduing Fist

After which, Uncle Black looked towards Qin Wentian, as he stated, “Release the Astral Soul you’ve condensed, and let me take a look.”

Qin Wentian, with a slight intention of his will, opened his Astral Gate, and in that same instance, a faint shadow of the Heavenly Hammer Constellation materialized on his forehead, incomparably resplendent. Also, on the outlines of the Astral Soul, a radiant corona of pure gold-colored light could be seen revolving around it, as if it was emphasizing the top quality of this particular Astral Soul.

“The Astral Rivers existing in the Nine Heavenly Layers of Heavens, as long as one can condense an Astral Soul belonging to the 3rd Heavenly Layer or higher, will have the golden-colored light corona around their Astral Soul. The higher the quality of one constellation, the more terrifying the astral energy contained within it will be, and the more dazzling the corona of light will be! All Astral Souls from the 1st to the 9th Heavenly Layer, will shine with their own light. For Astral Souls condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer and above, the corona of light will undergo a transformation, turning into a pure gold color. And as such, as long as one releases their Astral Soul, people will be able to tell which heavenly layer your Astral Soul was condensed from.”

“And, normally, only those legendary existences of the Heavenly Dipper Realm, would be able to open up four Astral Gates, and condense Astral Souls from the 4th Heavenly Layer. To think that you, during your teenage years, have already directly condensed an Astral Soul by forming an innate link with a constellation from the

5th Heavenly Layer. Such shocking talent might bring you many benefits, but it too, might be a tragedy. Do you understand?”

Uncle Black gazed at Qin Wentian, as he gradually explained. Qin Wentian inclined his head in agreement — he naturally understood the meaning behind it. Autumn Snow’s first Astral Soul was already from the 3rd Layer of Heavens, and her name had resounded throughout the Country of Chu. If the news of him condensing his first Astral Soul from the 5th Layer of Heavens leaked out, there might be many people wanting to rope him in their factions, or, in extreme cases, even kill him.

The realms of cultivations could be classified as: Body Refinement, Arterial Circulation, Yuanfu (Yuan Palace), followed by Heavenly Dipper. Cultivators of the Heavenly Dipper Realm were also known as Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns.

Sovereign-level cultivators had power far exceeding that of the Yuanfu Realm. Even in the Country of Chu, with a population of a trillion people, the number of sovereign-level cultivators could be counted on a single hand. If one of them appeared, the might and authority at their disposal, would be comparable to an entire country.

“Do you still remember the set of acupuncture techniques that I taught you before? It should enable you to camouflage that radiant golden-colored corona of your Astral Soul.” Uncle Black continued asking.

“I remember.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Good, your first Astral Soul, condensed from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, will bestow upon you an extremely tyrannical attack power and impenetrable defense. Although I said that I would no longer bother about your cultivation, I still have to remind you to take great care in choosing which constellation to form an innate link with for your 2nd Astral Soul condensation. Those constellations that would restrict the movements of your opponents, complemented with your insanely strong attack power, would be the best.”

“I’ve understood.” Qin Wentian respectfully replied.

“You can go.” Uncle Black closed his eyes as Qin Wentian retracted his steps, reaching the boundary of the training grounds. There was a bookshelf here, with many books and manuals stored in it. Contained within them, were the lifeblood of Uncle Black’s efforts and experiences. Ever since Qin Wentian was young, he had grown up by reading through all of the books which were stored here. The majority of the books had contents regarding acupuncture techniques, causing Qin Wentian to guess that the Astral Soul of Uncle Black had a high possibility of having something to do with acupuncture.

The variety of methods of acupuncture techniques recorded here were extremely numerous. There were methods used for healing, to smoothen meridians, to ignite hidden potential, etc. Now that Qin Wentian had already become a Stellar Martial Cultivator, he could infuse his acupuncture needles with Astral Energy for greater effect.

Qin Wentian withdrew one of the books from the bookshelf, sat down cross-leggedly, and began revising it's content. After which, he withdrew his silver needles and inserted them into the various acupuncture points located in his head region. After a few moments, Qin Wentian could feel the effect taking place; the radiant corona of golden light began to diminish in brilliance. This technique would only affect the intensity of the Astral Light. Despite dimming the light reflected, the might contained within the Astral Soul was still unchanged.

What Qin Wentian didn't know, was that this particular set of acupuncture techniques that he cultivated were extremely rare and valuable. Throughout the entirety of the Country of Chu, there was no others who would be able to do what he did.

After a long period of time, Qin Wentian removed the silver needles, opened his eyes as he intoned in a low voice, "Success. Now, unless it was myself intentionally using Astral Energy to forcefully break open the seals, the color of my Astral Soul will remain unchanged."

At the same time, Qin Wentian withdrew the Yuan Meteor Stone, as he sensed the resonance of the immense Astral Energy contained within.

All Yuan Meteor Stones originated from the Heavenly Layers, and were exceedingly precious. The amount of Astral Energy contained within the constellations was incomparably immense. Although Stellar Martial Cultivators could sense and absorb the Astral Qi, the amount which they absorbed could only be considered a droplet of water in the entire ocean! As such, even if

the Yuan Meteor Stones were small in size, the Astral Energy contained within was extremely terrifying.

In addition, Yuan Meteor stones could be used to greatly increase the probability of communication with the constellations. For example, if Qin Wentian, through his meditation, used the Yuan Meteor Stone in his hand in addition to that of his sensory abilities, he would be able to feel the connection between the Astral Constellation which the Yuan Meteor Stone had descended from. Other than this, the benefits of Yuan Meteor Stones include forming innate links with the constellations, aiding the cultivator in absorption of the Astral Energy, or even condensing an Astral Soul. As such, many cultivators used the Yuan Meteor Stones as a means of becoming a Stellar Martial Cultivator

From this, one could see how valuable the Yuan Meteor Stones was. There were almost no way for ordinary cultivators, who weren't from powerful families or clans, to be able to get ahold of it.

“The immense amount of Astral Energy contained within this stone, in addition to that of the domineering energy from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, should be able to allow me to swiftly break through.” Qin Wentian said in his heart. As he did so, he withdrew the Dragon Subduing Fist manual which Mustang had passed to him as his heart slightly trembled in amazement. This Dragon Subduing Fist, was an innate technique!

The Body Refinement Realm, formed the basis of the way of Martial Arts, enabling one to be able to obtain a perfect human body. At this realm, it was impossible for the cultivator to cultivate

innate techniques. Cultivators who were at the first realm of cultivation – Body Refinement Realm, could at most only cultivate the foundation of innate techniques. Only when the cultivator had broken through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, would they be able to cultivate the innate techniques, which possessed tyrannical might.

The Essence of the Dragon Subduing Fist was domineering and unyielding in nature, akin to an actual dragon. The manual was split into two sections — the first, the section containing the normal attacks, and the second, the section containing the innate techniques. In the attack section, there were only three stances recorded, namely; Raging Dragon Leaving the Oceans, Dragon Clashing in the Wilds, and Draconic Roar from the Nine Heavens.

“I will train in the Dragon Subduing Fist techniques during the day, and absorb the Astral Qi from the Heavenly Constellations at night with the aid of the Yuan Meteor Stone, with the hope of breaking through. Hopefully, my strength will be able to rapidly increase after these two days, enabling me to gain back my prestige from the Bai Clan.” Qin Wentian thought to himself. After all, it was better to wait for night time before attempting to absorb the Astral Qi from the Heavenly Constellations.

“The first move of the Dragon Subduing Fist is the move “Raging Dragon Leaving the Oceans”. This move appeared deceptively simple, but to master it, one had to be able to accomplish the point of pressing forward with an indomitable will. As the raging dragon rushed out from the oceans, the might it exhibited was incomparably overbearing. Qin Wentian detailedly analysed the critical points of this particular stance, as he concurrently displayed the first stance inside the training grounds. As his fists

struck out, he imagined the Astral Energy within him to be the image of a raging dragon, tyrannical and domineering, frenziedly rushing out from the oceans.

“Wrong, my movements were too wooden, it was completely different from the complete integration of body movements that the drawings depicted.” During his cultivation, Qin Wentian repeatedly introspected himself, as he unceasingly sought to match the drawings depicted, as he pondered over the critical points highlighting the essence of the move. After a long while, Qin Wentian went completely still. Closing his eyes as he lost himself in contemplation, in his mind’s eye, it seemed as though he could see a gigantic dragon, with a tyrannical appearance, looking extremely ferocious and powerful.

All of a sudden, Qin Wentian snapped open his eyes, as enlightenment blossomed on his face. Qin Wentian bent his waist as he stepped forward, adopting the posture of a dragon, as a roar of rage rang out, akin to that of a raging dragon. An extremely deafening sound reverberated out, as his fist sped forward, targeting a huge block of stone. The stone instantly exploded, as the stone fragments were blasted away in four directions.

“Hu...” Qin Wentian’s long hair danced madly in the wind, as he was filled with boundless enthusiasm. Glancing at his fist, his charming eyes were as bright as the stars. The power of this move was even greater than his expectations! If in the future, he were to step into the Arterial Circulation Realm, he would then be able to fully employ the true divine might of this ability. How terrifying would that be? A power so strong that he could even subdue the dragons and tame the tigers!

Even though he had already grasped the essence behind this stance, Qin Wentian did not stop, but continued on assiduously cultivating. This feeling, brought on by possessing this immense level of power, made him tremendously excited. It caused his blood to boil and set his heart on fire.

Time passed rapidly, and night had already descended. The maid servants Qin Yao sent to remind him to eat, were all rejected by Qin Wentian as he sealed the training grounds and proceeded on with his cultivation. In the span of one night, with the assistance of the Yuan Meteor Stone as well as his Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, he had already reached the peak of the 4th level of the Body Refinement Realm, just a hairs distance away from a breakthrough to the 5th level.

In the span of one night, that immense amount of Astral Energy contained within the Yuan Meteor Stone was entirely absorbed by Qin Wentian. One could see how terrifying his sensory abilities towards the Astral Constellation were.

Dawn approached, but Qin Wentian doggedly continued using his Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, until he finally broke through the barrier, and stepped into the 5th level of the Body Refinement Technique. 7 days, he spent only a total of 7 days to breakthrough five levels. If news of this were to be leaked out, without a doubt, it would be universally shocking.

After he broke through, Qin Wentian had no intentions to rest. Immediately, he continued on training the 2nd stance of the Dragon Subduing Fist, “Dragon Clashing in the Wilds”.

In these two days, Qin Wentian cultivated to the point of forgetting food and drink, completely immersing himself within.

Another day passed, as the stars in the skies gradually disappear, and the sun rose far off in the eastern horizon, casting a white glare over the land. Qin Wentian opened his eyes. Despite not sleeping, he was filled with vitality. Qin Wentian gazed mutely at the passing clouds in the skies, as though he had some troubles hidden in his heart.

Today, was the birthday celebration of Bai Qingsong, where there would be many representatives of the various powers in the Royal Capital gathered at the Bai Clan.

Thinking of everything that had happened for the past few days, Qin Wentian couldn't help but feel that he was in a surreal situation — as if he was dreaming. The Bai Clan repaying his gratitude with enmity, the emotionless side of Bai Autumn Snow, the innocence of Bai Qing, the iron bond between Qin Chuan and him, and now, in the blink of an eye, he had already become a Stellar Martial Cultivator and had condensed his Astral Soul. He decided, all matters, be they good or bad, should be settled today.

AGM 010 – Gathering At The Bai Residence

A fiery ball of inferno hung in the sky, as the flame-colored rays shined upon the land, and enveloped the entirety of the Sky Harmony City.

Within the city, exquisite towering structures and residences stood in great numbers. The magnificent buildings, when under the rays of sunlight, seemed to give off a majestic presence. Even the ancient streets of the city were constructed of luxurious bluestone, all leading to a gigantic grounds set up for the purpose of practicing martial arts. Behind that training grounds, was an imposing grandstand — and behind that grandstand, was a vast residence. It was the Bai Residence of the Sky Harmony City!

At this moment, the Bai Clan's current leader, Bai Qingsong, was sitting in the grandstand. Beside him, was a lady of about 16 years of age, with jade-white skin, and shoulder-length hair, with a buxom figure. A top-grade beauty beauty indeed.

“Congratulations to the Bai Clan's Clan Leader's birthday celebration.” Beneath the grandstand, on the red carpet that was laid over the stairs, there were countless people paying respects and offering their congratulations. Bai Qingsong, facing their direction, cupped his hands in response, as a huge smile broke out on his face.

“Clan Leader Bai, your beloved daughter is only 16 this year — her future is boundless.” A guest laughingly stated, as he cast a sidelong glance at Autumn Snow,

“You’re too polite.” Bai Qingsong waved away the compliment. As the number of invited guests increased, the atmosphere got more and more lively. And there were many invited guests who brought along members of the younger generation. It was very obvious that they were here to take part in the enrolment exercise conducted by the representatives of the various powers in the Royal Capital.

“Rumble!” In the instance, far off in the horizon, on the bluestone streets, a thunderous sound rang out, as if there were 10,000 hooves clad in steel dashing through the streets. Even though there was still a great distance between them, all the guests there at the training grounds could feel an immense vibration rumbling the ground, as all their gazes involuntarily turned in the direction of the sound, and their eyes uniformly concentrated on the far off horizon.

“The Silver Feather Legion!” Someone shouted as the pupils of the crowd contracted. Clad in silvery helmets, silver armour, and even silver saddles for the snow-white war horses of knights — they were all stunningly impressive, and riding speedily towards the direction of the grandstand, causing the hearts of the crowd to involuntarily shudder.

“The Sky Harmony City does not have such powerful troops. Obviously, this legion hails from the Royal Capital.” The crowd was thinking in their hearts. At this instant, the units of the Cavalier Legion all stopped at the area just before the grandstand. Lining up uniformly, only slits of their eyes could be seen from their fully armoured self. Sharp and terrifying, just a single glance, was sufficient to strike fear into the hearts of the onlookers.

“Shua!” The voices of the unit rang out in cohesion, as they dismounted from their war horses at the same moment. The leader of this unit, had his hand placed atop his helmet, as he slowly took it off, revealing an incomparably sharp and eagle-like gaze, this person was none other than Icehawk! Saluting towards Bai Qingsong, he stated, “From the Capital of Chu, the Silver Feather Cavalier Legion pays respect and offers congratulations to the Clan Leader of the Bai Clan.”

As the sound of his voice faded away, a great number of people came forward, bearing gifts from the Silver Feather Cavalier Legion.

“Even the Silver Feather Cavalier Legion from the Royal Capital came.” Whispers abounded as conversation broke out between the invited guests.

Bai Qingsong lightly smiled as he looked towards the Legion Leader before saying, “Many thanks, please take your seat.”

Icehawk slightly inclined his head, as he walked up the red carpeted stairs, before being seated at the far side of the grandstand. At this moment, thunderous sounds of horses galloping rang out once again, causing the crowd’s heart to tremble. However, the sounds were much louder in intensity, as clouds of dusts could be seen rising in the horizon, throughout all the streets of the Sky Harmony City.

“Royal Capital, the Mo Clan pays their respects, and offers their congratulations to Clan Leader Bai.”

“Royal Capital, Violet Palace, pays their respects, and offers their congratulations to Clan Leader Bai.”

The thunderous sounds and the shocking vibrations came closer and closer to the grandstand, before stopping as legions of soldiers, mounted on golden lions, appeared one after another, in the field of vision of the crowd.

However, the most attention grabbing thing was that, in the centre of the bluestone streets, there were a number of carriages that was slowly approaching. Although the carriages were only a few in number, and their momentum was slow, the image depicted on the carriage was actually that of a golden tulip! And the beast that was pulling the carriage, was actually a draconic horse with antenna-like things growing atop its head.

“The golden tulip insignia... they are from the Ye Clan.” Those with extensive worldly experiences spoke, as their countenance paled. The Ye Clan, was like the shining sun in the sky, producing countless geniuses. Some would enter into the top academies of the Royal Capital, while others chose to serve in the military, rising up in ranks. For the female descendants of the Ye Clan, many were favored, and some were even married into the Royal Clan, further consolidating the power of the Ye Clan. The Ye Clan was truly in their prime, even far surpassing the Qin Clan from the past, when their Ancestor, Qin Wu, was still alive.

“It seems like the rumor of the Ye Clan intending to have a marriage engagement with the Bai Clan was true.” Many people were thinking that all of these invited guests from the Royal

Capital should have outstanding relationships and close connections with the Ye Clan.

As the carriages pulled to a stop, an old man, with eyes that flashed with a piercing gleam, and were filled with a sense of vitality akin to the tigers and dragons, walked out. Bai Qingsong quickly stood up, as he cupped his hands in the direction of the old man before politely stating, “To think that Old Master Ye could find the time to grace my humble abode with your austere presence! Please, take a seat.”

“Right.” The old man from the Ye Clan slightly inclined his head as he moved forward with his men. Although the number of the bodyguards he had was not numerous, one could not underestimate him. After all, the old man was an extremely terrifying existence that was at the Yuanfu Realm.

“Autumn Snow, this was what you brought to me, what you brought to the Bai Clan!” Bai Qingsong emotionally clasped his daughter’s hands, as he suppressed his surging emotions. He knew that all of this that was happening today, was only possible because of one person. And that person, was none other than his daughter, Autumn Snow.

At this moment, in the distance, there was a line of human shadows, approaching the grandstand, causing the pupils of the crowd to contract. Invited guests brought along their younger generations because they were interested in the enrolment exercise conducted by the representatives of the various prestigious academies in the Royal Capital. “Are those representatives from the various academies?”

“Emperor Star Academy, it’s really the Emperor Star Academy! There’s a saying, [Enroll in Emperor Star Academy, depart as a Yuanfu Cultivator]. In the entirety of the Country of Chu, those of the Yuanfu realm are all legendary figures with immense authority.” Many in the crowd revealed expressions of desire and longing on their faces, even those members belonging to the powerful clans were no exception. They were the ones who held all the hopes and were the future of their family members.

“There’s still the Royal Academy, this academy was created by the Royal Clan, and enjoys the protection and blessing of the Emperor.”

“Divine Wind Academy, and the Seven Stars Academy, all of the prestigious academies of the Royal Capital have arrived.” Excitement was apparent on the faces of all the guests. Although there were numerous academies in the Royal Capital, the one that came to the Sky Harmony City today, were the four academies with the greatest power. Obviously, their intentions were clear. They are all here for Autumn Snow.

Silence descended, as the representatives of the four great academies arrived at the training grounds facing grandstand. A representative stood up and calmly said: “Today, those below the age of 16, with a strength level of 36 bulls and above, are eligible to partake in the enrollment examination, and have a chance to enter into one of our four great academies. Now, let those who fulfilled the requirements, step up onto the stage.”

Even before his voice faded away, the crowd of guests caused a

commotion as those who met the requirements, struggled to push their way through the crowd. There were also many who lowered their heads in disappointment. This requirement was too harsh... For Martial Cultivators, to reach the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm before the age of 16, only geniuses would be able to reach the level.

“There is one other exception to the earlier requirements stated. If you are a Stellar Martial Cultivator, who has formed an innate link and condensed an Astral Soul from the constellations in the 2nd Heavenly Layer or higher, you too, possess the qualifications to join in this enrolment exercise.” Another representative stated impassively.

At this moment, “Dong, Dong....” All of a sudden, tremors once again shook the ground, as the sounds of horses galloping came closer and closer. The eyes of the crowd turned back, as they gazed into the horizon, only to see a unit of cavalry galloping fiercely, with speed akin to a fierce tornado, as the cavalry swiftly arrived in front of the training grounds, causing the crowd of people milling around, to be forced to the side, opening up a path for them.

The man in the lead, had his gaze fixed upon Bai Qingsong, as his expression was as sharp as swords.

“Oh, so brother Qin Chuan has arrived. Please, take a seat.” Bai Qingsong sat there, making no attempts to stand up to receive him, as he emotionlessly stated, with traces of a cold smile hanging on his lips.

Qin Chuan and his men dismounted, as they entered the training grounds, and proceeded forward to a corner of the grandstand before they sat down. The eyes of the crowd followed them to the location where the Qin Clan was seated. The region was occupied by all the powerful clans of the Sky Harmony City. Them, as expected, brought along the various geniuses of their clan to try out for the enrolment exercise of the four prestigious academies.

“Even Qin Yao is here! Her talent is extraordinary — one year ago she’d already been chosen to enter the Royal Academy. Currently, out of the four great beauties of the Sky Harmony City, three have already arrived.

“Bai Qingsong clearly had intentions to have a marriage engagement with the Ye Clan. It was rumored that two days ago, there was someone who barged into the Qin Clan, threatening them to be here today. I’m afraid that today, if Autumn Snow chooses to enter the Emperor Star Academy, the Bai Clan will use this excuse to break off their prior engagement. If that’s the case, the Qin Clan is only here today to throw their face away.

The crowd was whispering under their breath, speculating about what would happen later. Qin Chuan wasn’t affected by the mutterings at all, as he cast his vision into the crowd, as if he was seeking someone. After a short moment, his vision landed on a figure in the crowd.

“Wentian.” Qin Chuan pupils contracted. Qin Wentian had really came today.

Qin Wentian had long ago arrived, mixing in with the crowd. His

eyes held a trace of calmness, with hints of unswerving determination.

“Alright, those who wish to enter the enrolment examination, please make your way to the stage.” Talon coldly exclaimed. He was one of the representatives of the four prestigious academies in the Royal Capital. Not only him, to emphasize their sincerity in expressing their interest for Autumn Snow to join them, among the representatives from the Royal Academy, even his senior was here personally.

Beneath the stage of the training grounds, there were many youths lined up, as they made their way up the stage. All of these people exhibited an extraordinary aura. Obviously, these were all the young geniuses of the Sky Harmony City.

“Ning Feng from the Ning Clan, only 15 years of age, has already broken through to the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm. It’s said that he’d already condensed his Astral Soul last year. Definitely someone of shocking talent.”

“Chen Yu, nearing the age of 16, although he’s not condensed his Astral Soul yet, with his cultivation level at the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm, there’s hope for him to enter into one of the four great academies.

“Lin Yue, aged 15, current cultivation at the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm. She condensed her first Astral Soul at the age of 13, and is one of the four great beauties of Sky Harmony City.”

The majority of the crowd cast their gaze at Lin Yue. Autumn Snow and Lin Yue were part of the four great beauties of the Sky Harmony City, and as their ages were similar, they would constantly be compared to each other in the same breath. However currently, Autumn Snow seem to shine with a luster that Lin Yue could not match.

Their method of cultivation was naturally different from Qin Wentian, as even before they'd begun to condense their astral souls, they'd already absorbed the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, and begun cultivating as a Martial Cultivator. It had been the same for Autumn Snow, but it was only after Qin Wentian's countless urgings, that Autumn Snow had stopped cultivating as a Martial Cultivator..

Despite doing so, Qin Wentian knew that Autumn Snow had still continued her absorption of the Heaven and Earth's Yuan Qi. If not, with her talent and with his help, she would've certainly condense her Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer much earlier.

At this moment, on the stage, the figure of Autumn Snow could be seen as she proceeded up. The gaze of the crowd, akin to a moth flying towards the flame, was attracted to and riveted on her.

The talented youngster of the Bai Clan, one of the four great beauties, and also the top-rated genius of the Sky Harmony City, someone with such shocking talent that she caused the four great academies to scramble for her. Unknowingly, glancing at the figure of this beautiful lady, many people in the crowd had already begun to idolise her, setting her as a target for motivation.

AGM 011 – Examination

Autumn Snow descended slowly, step by step, down the grandstand, as her headful of black hair danced about in the wind. That beautiful face emitted an aura of irrepressible charm that was capable of stirring the heartstrings of the crowd

Such a ravishing countenance, when combined with world-shaking talent.... “Unparalleled beauty indeed.” The hearts of many in the crowd were thinking.

“It’s said that even before Autumn Snow condensed her Astral Soul, she was already a genius that had already broken through to the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm. Now, to think that she could condense an Astral Soul from the constellations from the 3rd Heavenly Layer on her first attempt... Such a peak level genius will bring glory to the Sky Harmony City. If I could be lucky enough to marry her, I could die with no regrets.”

They could only sigh ruefully, involuntarily comparing themselves with the rumored party, Ye WuQue, who was seeking a marriage engagement with Autumn Snow. Maybe, only with the status and talent of people like Ye WuQue, would they be comparable to Autumn Snow. That scrub from the Qin Clan, Qin Wentian, obviously didn’t know how tall the heavens were, or how thick the earth was. Such shameless people should indeed be humiliated. However, the Qin Clan this time round actually brought their troops along. Who knew what they were planning.

After a short moment, Autumn Snow had arrived in the centre of the training grounds, and purposefully stood there at will. It was

as if all the splendour of today was focused on her alone. At this moment, in the training grounds, there were already a total of over 30 people.

The eyes of the various representatives, blazing like burning torches, focused only on Autumn Snow. As for the other examinees, it was as though the representatives didn't have much interest in them at all. After all, Autumn Snow was the main reason they were here.

The only exception to this, was Mustang. His eyes, glimmered incessantly, as he spoke, "Is there still anyone who wishes to participate?."

"That should be all." Talon lightly replied. He had to get Autumn Snow to enroll in the Royal Academy at all costs.

However, at this moment, the shadow of a figure walked out from the crowd, as he made his way towards the training grounds. Looking at the features of this person, the crowd was stunned into silence.

"What the? Qin Wentian?" Many people in the crowd started muttering under their breath. To think that Qin Wentian actually came. Could it be that he didn't know of the requirements to participate in the examination?

Bai Qingsong obviously had not anticipated the arrival of Qin Wentian. He coldly glanced at Qin Wentian, while shifting his gaze to Qin Chuan, before thinking in his heart, "The Qin Clan sent

their men to rescue Qin Wentian in the middle of the night, but why would Qin Chuan permit Qin Wentian's appearance today? But no matter. Since he is here, the proceedings of today should be even more beneficial for our Bai Clan." It seemed as though Autumn Snow hadn't spoken to Bai Qingsong about the happenings of that night.

After spotting Qin Wentian, the eyes of Mustang shined with brilliance as they narrowed into slits, filled with laughter. At the critical moment, he could give up on the enrolment of Autumn Snow. But regardless of the cost, he had to get Qin Wentian to enter the Emperor Star Academy!

Mustang involuntarily glanced at Talon, only to see that his face was filled with contempt. After which, almost immediately, Mustang felt as if flowers were blooming in his heart. He was imagining the scenario whereby which Qin Wentian finally unleashed his Astral Soul, and how fascinating the expressions on Talon's face would be.

Atop the training grounds, Autumn Snow faced Qin Wentian directly, and as their gazes locked, Autumn Snow coldly stated, "Qin Wentian, you do not have the qualifications to stand on this stage — get down from here."

Qin Wentian's only reply, was to gaze at Autumn Snow, as his lips curled up into a slight smile, before turning his head away with no intention to answer her.

Looking at the reaction of Qin Wentian, Autumn Snow involuntarily furrowed her brows, as if unsatisfied about

something, before again stating, “Qin Wentian, I know you feel unfairness in your heart, however, between you and me, there is a great divide that you will forever be unable to cross. It’s impossible for us to be together. Even if your heart still holds traces of unwillingness, you should stop your nonsense. This training ground is not the place for you to be. You better leave now.”

“You truly overestimate yourself.” Qin Wentian calmly replied, as he stood to the side, with no intentions to converse further with Autumn Snow. This woman — she was only 16 years of age — to think that her scheming abilities were already at such a high level. Qin Wentian felt sorry for his past self, spending all of his time and efforts, sincerely treating her as his kin. Everything was just an illusion, he was dancing to her machinations, merely there to be her stepping stone, a tool for her to use.

“My good nephew, Wentian.”

On the grandstand, the voice of Bai Qingsong drifted over. Qin Wentian turned his gaze to the direction of the voice, only to see Bai Qingsong wearing a smile on his face as he said, “My good nephew, Wentian, my daughter Autumn Snow, had a heart of gold. She pitied you for being unable to cultivate, and for the past few years, had expended all her efforts in teaching and guiding you, hoping for you to be able to finally cultivate again. Although her efforts were in vain, the backbreaking efforts she expended can not be neglected, and yet you were such a beast in human-clothing.”

“Autumn Snow guided me? Beast in human-clothing?” Qin Wentian’s expression turned frosty, and as he looked at the acts of

the deceptively righteous Bai Qingsong, he couldn't help but feel an evil chill creep into his heart. To think that the person he had once respected so much, was actually such a despicable hypocrite.

“Although you had a marriage engagement with Autumn Snow, but still, you were merely engaged and not yet married. To think that you wanted to taint my precious daughter Autumn Snow, and even have designs on my younger daughter Bai Qing... I'm truly disappointed and hurt. But taking into account of our past relations, I will not fault you the slightest, I only hope that after today, you will not appear again within my sights.”

Bai Qingsong's voice was calm, but yet Qin Wentian had already seen his true colors. If Bai Qingsong wanted to break the marriage engagement, he could just do so. To think that he would be so despicable, and use such an underhanded method... It was just like the time in the past when he needed help — when he had no choice but to fawn over the Qin Clan. This man, after he achieved his objectives, would bury all past relations ruthlessly, changing faces in a second.

After hearing the words uttered by Bai Qingsong, many people in the crowd started to look at Qin Wentian with contempt in their eyes. The majority of the voices in the crowd began to rise up angrily, and unceasingly, viciously cursed Qin Wentian.

“Silence.” Talon faintly shouted indifferently, causing the crowd to quiet down. Looking at Qin Wentian, Talon continued coldly, “It's nothing if you're unable to cultivate. To think that you were a person with such vile character... even though the Bai Clan Master wouldn't bear grudges, this is not a place where you can be so

impudent. Scram.”

“Junior Brother...” At Talon’s side, a middle aged man with an elegant bearing, glanced at Talon. However, Talon quickly interjected “Senior, this person was born with crippled meridians. There’s no way he’d be able to cultivate. He was the one engaged to Autumn Snow, therefore it must’ve been hard for her to endure that for three years.”

After hearing Talon’s word, the elegantly dressed man instantly understood. Talon was trying to gain the favor of Autumn Snow — hoping to be able to form a good impression to aid their Royal Academy in the enrolment of Autumn Snow.

Qin Wentian’s expression got increasingly colder. The Royal Academy was one of the top prestigious academies in the Royal Capital, yet they actually acted in such a way just for the mere shadow of a hope that Autumn Snow would join them. How disappointing.

“I came up the stage because the four great academies were conducting an enrolment exercise, did I do something wrong? Elder, you are of the senior generation, which also hails from the prestigious Royal Academy. Even if you favor Autumn Snow, you should not be so blinded and foolish — humiliating and turning me away without even checking my qualifications. It’s truly lamentable, if this is how the respected Royal Academy usually acts.”

“Impudent!” Talon shouted in rage. “I personally inspected your meridians before. Are you telling me that I made a mistake?”

“If elder insists that to be so, Wentian has nothing to say.” Qin Wentian straightened his back, as he stood there dignified and imposing.

“The words of this little brother, does have some merit to them. Talon, don’t you think your behavior is a little too disgraceful?” Mustang couldn’t help but feel overjoyed in his heart when he saw the conflicts arising between Qin Wentian and Talon.

Talon coldly glanced at Mustang, as he replied, “To think that Brother Mustang actually had the intention to protect this person. If that is so, I shall of course, give face to Brother Mustang. However, don’t blame me for not holding back when his lack of qualifications are revealed later on in the examination.”

“Let the examination begin.”

As the representatives of the four great academies spoke, very swiftly, two stone mirrors were erected on to the training stage. These two mirrors looked extremely mystifying. For each of the mirror, from top to bottom, there were 9 darkened light orbs located on them. Despite the similar appearances between them, the effect of each of these two mirrors differed greatly. The one on the left seemed to emanate a faint trace of Heaven and Earth Yuan Energy, while the mirror on the right, emitted a faint trace of Astral Qi fluctuation..

“The first round of the examination, is to determine your level of talent for sensing the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth, as well as

sensing the Astral Qi from the constellations. We will start by examining each of you individually.”

After which, someone murmured, “This type of stone mirror is known as the Yuan Observing Mirror and the Astral Observing Mirror. One of the advantages it possesses, is to test for the level of talent.”

Everyone from the Province of the Nine Skies would at least have the grade of a 1-star rating regarding talent in sensing both the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth and Astral Qi from the Constellations. And thus, would certainly be able to ignite the lowest light orb placement of both stone mirrors. And as long as one had the talent of a 1-star rating, it would be sufficient for the person to cultivate as a Martial Cultivator, absorbing the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth. However, if one wanted to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator, one’s talent would need to be at the grade of a three-star rating, and ignite at least three light orbs of the Astral Observing Mirror, before they could do so.

Hence, it’s simple for people of the Province of the Nine Skies to cultivate as a Martial Cultivator. But, to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator? It was extremely tough.

As for the reason behind this, many people speculated that since the birth of the human race, the world was already saturated with the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, so it was naturally much easier to absorb the Yuan Qi for cultivation purposes. In comparison, the Astral Qi from the constellations only existed far beyond the skies, in the galaxies of the Astral Rivers, in the nine layers of Heaven. It would be comparatively harder for cultivators to be able to sense

the Qi for absorption, for cultivation purposes.

Naturally, no matter the affinity for both Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi, and the Astral Qi from the Constellations, one could increase their sensory abilities and affinity for them through Houtian practices like meditation. The greater your affinity grew, the higher graded your talent would be. In the Province of the Nine Skies, the majority of those with strong affinity with the Astral Constellations would delay their condensing of their Astral Souls as they hoped to increase their sensory abilities to the peak with the aid of meditation, before attempting to form an innate link with a Astral Constellation from an even higher heavenly layer.

At this moment, there was already someone walking towards the stone mirror on the left, and placing his palm in the specially designed groove in the shape of a “凹”. After a moment, from the bottom to top, the orbs glowed with light, instantaneously lighting up three of the darkened light orbs.

“Talent rating for Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, 3-Star”

After which, the same person walked to the stone mirror on the right, to the front of the Astral Observing Mirror, and placed his palm in the groove again. However, this time around, only two of the darkened light orbs lit up, causing the representatives of the four great academies to shake their heads. Failure.

“You can go back now.” That youth standing on the stage, was rejected by the representatives. He couldn’t help feeling traces of unwillingness in his heart, as depression was apparent on his face. The first round of the examination had been over for him just like

that.

The second person had a 4-star rating for the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, and a 2-star rating for Astral Qi from the constellations. Although this signified that he would easily be able to cultivate as a Martial Cultivator, that probably was his limit. Wanting to step into the ranks of Stellar Martial Cultivators was highly improbable for him, and as such, he was rejected by the representatives as well.

Swiftly, four more person were eliminated from the examination, causing the atmosphere to be tinged with a feeling of nervousness. The passing rate for the first round of examination was so low... The four great academies were indeed truly worthy of their name and prestige.

AGM 012 – Divide

“Let me give it a try.” At this moment, the shadow of a figure of a youth stepped forward. He was none other than Ning Feng, from the Ning Clan!

“Ning Feng, he should be able to pass.” The eyes of the spectators flashed with excitement as they observed. Ning Feng walked towards the stone mirror on the left, placing his palm into the groove with the shape of a “凹”. Instantly, the two darkened orbs at the bottom of the mirror lit up. And swiftly afterwards, the 3rd, the 4th, all the way to the 6th light orb, lit up in succession. His affinity with Heaven and Earth’s Yuan Qi, was a 6-star rating.

Immediately, he proceeded onwards to the stone mirror on the right, undergoing the inspection procedure once again. His affinity with Astral Qi, was a 4-star rating. This evaluation caused many in the audience to gasp in awe. Today, Ning Feng from the Ning Clan definitely had a chance to enroll in one of the four great and prestigious academies.

Atop the stage, the representatives collectively inclined their heads in agreement, signifying that Ning Feng was eligible for the second round of examination.

Ning Feng smiled elatedly, pleased with himself, with traces of hot-bloodedness of youth apparent on his features, as he stood on the opposite side of the crowd.

Very quickly, six others went up for the examination. The

majority of the six managed to impress a few of the representatives, but to no avail. The criteria of passing the first examination was for all representatives to concur.

“To think that the affinity Chen Yu has for sensing the Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi is a 7-star rating, even higher than Ning Feng. Although he only has a 3-star rating affinity for Astral Qi, with his current talent, all three other representatives had given their agreement, with the exception of the Emperor Star Academy. Truly, it’s not so easy for one to enter the Emperor Star Academy.

The crowd discussed in a low voice — it was simply too difficult to enter the Emperor Star Academy. That place was the cradle for true, peak-level geniuses.

“Lin Yue is the awesome one! Not only is she one of the four great beauties, her talent is shockingly high too. To think that her affinity for the Astral Qi has reached the realm of a 6-star talent... As expected of one who condensed her first Astral Soul at the age of 13.”

“So what? Next up, it’s Autumn Snow’s turn.” The gaze of the spectators were riveted on the silhouettes of the two figures who’d yet to take the examination — Autumn Snow and Qin Wentian. Obviously, Qin Wentian was neglected. The audience only had eyes for Autumn Snow.

“Qin Wentian, you better watch this clearly.” Autumn Snow cast a sidelong glance at Qin Wentian as she lifted her foot, and proceeded to the Yuan Observing Mirror on the left. Placing her exquisite jade-like hands into the groove in the shape of a “凹”,

instantaneously, three of the darkened orbs lit up, and a moment later, a total of seven orbs shone with dazzling light. She was a 7-star talent!

“If not for me spending untold amounts of time on mediation to heighten my sensory ability towards the Astral Constellations, I would’ve long surpassed the 7-star talent rating of today.” Autumn Snow lightly said. She didn’t even gaze at Qin Wentian as she swiftly proceeded on to the Astral Observing Mirror on the right. She repeated her actions, placing her jade-like hands into the groove, and in that instant, the darkened orbs lit up, shining dazzlingly, akin to a starry radiance of the boundless stars in the skies

“How bright.” The spectators could feel piercing pain in their eyes, and swiftly, the eight orbs, other than dazzlingly shining, were also emanating Astral Light, invoking agitation and shock to countless members of the audience in the grandstand, causing them to stand up involuntarily for a better look.

“7-star talent for Heaven and Earth’s Yuan Qi, and 8-star talent for Astral Qi from the Constellations. What a monster.”

Silence, abruptly manifested, as many people gasped, and drew in a cold breath.

“Autumn Snow, the Royal Academy, welcomes your enrollment.” Talon smiled gently. This was only the first examination, yet to think that the representative for the Royal Academy was willing to accept her enrollment straight away based on the talent she displayed.

“The Seven Stars Academy, welcomes your enrollment.”

“Divine Wind Academy, sincerely invites you to be one of our members.”

A representative from the Emperor Star Academy, standing beside Mustang, also opened his mouth, preparing to welcome Autumn Snow. However, at that instant, Mustang lowly intoned, “Wait a bit.”

The expression of the representative froze, as he questioned Mustang with his gaze as he asked, “What do you mean? Why are you stopping me?”

“There’s no rush.” Mustang grinned, as he stopped replying.

Autumn Snow proceeded to the opposite side of the crowd. Arrogance and contempt infusing her gaze as she turned her head back, glancing at Qin Wentian. Akin to a princess looking down on a suitor, who had no idea of the immensity of Heaven and Earth.

Qin Wentian calmly walked before the stone mirror on the left, placing his palm in the groove and instantly, five darkened light orbs lit up, causing the expressions of the audience to freeze in shock. Qin Wentian’s affinity with the Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi, was actually, a 5-star talent rating.

Swiftly after, Qin Wentian proceeded onwards, arriving at the

stone mirror on the right, lightly placing his palm in the groove, and in that instant, the darkened light orbs begin to sparkle resplendently – seven orbs continually lit up, causing the spectators to be dumbstruck, as though a bolt of lighting went off in their hearts.

“7-star talent!” The pupils of the crowd contracted, but who would have predicted that, the 8th orb, almost immediately, started to light up as well. The brilliance of the astral radiance permeated the whole training grounds, while countless members of the audience were shaking their heads. “How is this possible?”

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to Autumn Snow as he calmly stated, “8-star talent, is it really that strong?”

As his voice faded away, the 9th and final orb of the Astral Observing Mirror begin to glow.

“Weng!” A buzzing sound rang out. The radiance emitted by the resplendent rays of Astral Light were so dazzling, it was as though it was intending on competing with the Sun. That moment, the whole set of darkened orbs on the Astral Observing Mirror completely lit up.

Suddenly, “Kacha!” A crisp sound rang out. Cracks swiftly appeared on the surface of the Astral Observing Mirror, as the Astral Light began to converge onto a single spot, before explosively shooting up to the heavens. The Astral Observing Mirror, shattered into pieces. Qin Wentian remained standing there, motionlessly, with his palms still extended in the now-destroyed groove. Directing his gaze towards Autumn Snow, he

asked again, “8-star talent, is it really that awesome?”

“Hu...” Mustang let out a breath that he didn’t realise he was holding. The Astral Observing Mirror shattered, as it was unable to take the pressure caused by a 9-star talent. His eyes began to shine with a light, that was as bright as the constellations in the skies.

“What happened?” The countenance of Talon’s senior, Seifer, grew heavy. A 9-star talent before the age of 16. This person, if he stepped on the path of Stellar Martial Cultivators, his future would be boundless.

Under the questioning of his senior Seifer, Talon visibly stiffened as he explained in a low voice, “Senior, this person was born with crippled meridians, and is someone that was unable to practice cultivation. He was driven out from the Bai Clan, with them proposing to annul the previous marriage engagement. Such a man, even if he had a 9-star talent, it is also useless.”

Seifer silently nodded his head. He believed that both the Sky Harmony City and Bai Clan, would not make such a mistake. Although he lamented the fact that a 9-star talent was buried like this.

Autumn Snow also glanced at Qin Wentian, her beautiful eyes flickering incessantly. No wonder he was able to guide her, his talent was monstrous indeed. However, what use was there? Ye WuQue, was the real genius, one of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital.

“Qin Wentian, you couldn’t cultivate, and thus, lacking distractions, were able to focus all your attention on meditation. To think that all your efforts had actually managed to heighten your affinity to such a degree. Truly a tragedy.” Autumn Snow calmly stated, as her expression returned to normal. “Next, in the second round of the examination, I will truly show you how great the divide is between you and me.”

“Keke!”, Talon coldly smiled. “The first round of examination, it will be considered that you passed. However, for the second round, talent is useless. What we want to measure, is strength. If you are unable to meet the qualifications, it means that you are intentionally pulling a prank on the four great academies. When the time comes, I will let you know the consequences of lying. Set up the wardrum!”

After his sentence sounded out, a gigantic drum was brought over and up onto the stage. The drum was constructed from the skin of demonic bulls, and was able to determine the level of a person’s strength.

Qin Wentian leveled his gaze at Talon. His talent was the 9-star rating, yet he merely considered to have passed?

How laughable.

Only nine candidates remained after the first round of examination. It was not known how many would be left after the second round. The minimum requirement of the second round was that one must at least have the strength level of 36 bulls. However, that was only the minimum requirement. There was no guarantee

that it was sufficient for one to enter one of the four great academies just based on that level of strength.

“Every reverberation of the drum equates to the strength level of 10 bulls. Try your best to enable the drums to sound out. Everyone will have three attempts.” A voice explained. Almost immediately after, a figure arrived in front of the drums. Arching his body like the bending of a bow, his strike was similar to an notched arrow, gathering strength. Abruptly, an explosive sound rang out! The body of the figure rushed out, as if his strike carried the force of a rocket, and he swung his fist violently towards the drum.

“Boom....” The sound of the drum wavered in the air, resounding throughout the training ground. One reverberation, strength level of 10 bulls.

“Boom, Boom!.” The second and third reverberation rang out, but soon after, the sound gradually diminished, it seems as though the strength behind the earlier strike was unable to reach the 4th reverberation. The representatives from the four great academies, collectively shook their heads. The strength of this person was insufficient to make the drum reverberate four times, and he didn’t have the talent to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator. As such, he was eliminated.

“Let me try.” Lin Yue proceeded forward. Currently, she was suppressed by Autumn Snow, and felt a bit depressed. With a slight intention of will, the shape of a rabbit, condensed from astral light, materialised on her forehead. Obviously, this was the astral soul that she had condensed.

Astral Souls condensed from the rabbit constellation, were able to grant the cultivator a vigorous body, keen ears, agility, and reaction and movement speed. Lin Yue sprung forward, with power comparable to a tornado. “Bang!”, her fist instantly struck against the drum.

“Boom, Boom, Boom....” The drum sound continually rang out for six times, reverberating through the air. Lin Yue possessed a strength level comparable to 66 bulls. Looking at her small body frame, it was inconceivable to think that she was actually strong enough to slay ferocious beasts.

Lin Yue had already went all out, holding nothing in reserve in her first attempt.

“You are eligible to join my Seven Stars Academy.” One of the representatives extended an invitation to her. The talent of Lin Yue wasn’t bad at all, and certainly worthy of nurturing.

“The Divine Wind Academy would welcome you as well.” Upon hearing that two of the academies offered a position, a smile broke out on her visage. However, in her heart, she couldn’t help but feel disappointment as she turned her gaze to look at the Royal Academy and the Emperor Star Academy. Apparently, she hadn’t met the qualifications to join them.

Although she was disappointed, Lin Yue still replied, “I choose to join the Divine Wind Academy.”

Other than that, only Chen Yu and Ning Feng managed to

perform well enough to secure an invitation, joining the Seven Stars Academy and the Divine Wind Academy respectively. However, both the Royal Academy and the Emperor Star Academy, still had not extend their invitations to any of the candidates. After all, they were here namely for Autumn Snow. The performance of the earlier candidates wouldn't be able to easily move their hearts.

After that, the only participants left were Autumn Snow and two others.

“Qin Wentian, open your eyes and watch this clearly.” Autumn Snow lightly said, as she walked in front of the drums, nonchalantly executed an ordinary-looking strike. The drum sounded out five times, reverberating in the air.

“7th level of the Body Refinement Realm, Autumn Snow, just an ordinary strike of hers contained the strength level of 50 bulls! How terrifying. It's said that she delayed her cultivation on purpose to heighten her sensory abilities. If not, her cultivation level would undoubtedly be much higher.”

For those who absorbed and cultivated the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, the strength levels for Martial Cultivators could be classified as: strength level of 1 bull, 4 bulls, 9 bulls, 16 bulls, 25 bulls, and at the 7th stage – strength level of 49 bulls.

As for Stellar Martial Cultivators, they were indefinitely more powerful. The Astral Soul would be able to boost their strength by a certain degree. Depending on the various kinds of Astral Souls, the degree boosted was different for each, and as such, there was not a definite scale to measure how much their strength level

would be boosted by.

Autumn Snow calmly gazed at Qin Wentian, before she retreated a few steps and released her Astral Soul. Golden Crane Astral Soul! The outline of her Astral Soul shone with a faint golden light, signifying that her Astral Soul was condensed from forming an innate link with a constellation of the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

“Crane Cries in the Wilds!” Autumn Snow coldly intoned, as her posture shifted to something similar to a demonic crane hunting it’s prey, before instantly striking out with a claw-like hand, with speed akin to lightning, as a thunderous sound rumbled out. It was as though thunder had truly appeared, causing shrill buzzing sounds in the ears of the audience, threatening to deafen them.

“Boom, Boom, Boom...” Momentarily, five drum sounds rang out. However, the sound had not subsided yet

“Boom...” The sound reverberated in the air. This was the 6th reverberation. On the grandstand, the crowd collectively stood up, with solemn expressions on their faces. Genius. She was definitely a genius.

Accompanied by yet another reverberation, the sound lingered in the air. When the 7th sound rang out, it was as though a tornado devastated the entire space, sweeping through Heaven and Earth.

7 reverberations equated to a strength level of 70 bulls! This was the boosting effect caused by the condensation of Astral Soul. To think that the drum that was manufactured using the leather of

demonic bulls would vibrate to such an extent that it seemed on the point of disintegrating.

Not only that, Autumn Snow had reached the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm by absorbing and cultivating using the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth. If she had reached this level after the condensation of her Astral Soul, through purely the absorption of Astral Qi, her strength level would undoubtedly be much more tyrannical.

The crowd couldn't help but lose themselves in the face of that incomparable beauty as they gazed upon her. Consequently, Qin Wentian seemed so weak and little in comparison.

Just as she said, in this second round of examination, she would let Qin Wentian see exactly how wide the divide was between the two of them.

AGM 013 – Showy Display

On top of the stage, the spectators inclined their heads to look at the empty air, as the residual sound of the drumbeats reverberated in the air, and a terrifying surge of energy emerged — so powerful that it was capable of shocking people.

“A demoness. No wonder Ye WuQue from the Ye Clan was willing to give up the marriage engagement with the royal clan for her. As a phoenix among women, her accomplishments in the future will definitely not be any lesser when compared to Ye WuQue.” Seifer from the Royal Academy silently stated in his heart. This woman, regardless of the cost, they must ensure that she joined the Royal Academy.

“Autumn Snow, should you enter the Royal Academy, I can immediately gift you with a Yuanfu-Graded Cultivation Technique, as well as three incomparably exquisite innate-level techniques. How about it?” Seifer offered, extending an invitation for Autumn Snow to join the Royal Academy.

“The same goes for my Divine Wind Academy. We’re willing to gift you with a Yuanfu-Graded Cultivation Technique, including three innate-level techniques. Other than that, we would get an elder of the Yuanfu Realm to personally coach you.” The Divine Wind Academy immediately raised the bar, offering even better conditions.

“The Seven Star Academy offers you the choice to choose between three Yuanfu-Graded Cultivation Techniques, and would also gift you three innate-level techniques. Not only that, we will

grant you special rights to bring five of your family members along for enrolment as well.” The Seven Star Academy, not only were they willing to nurture Autumn Snow, they even gave her a chance to extend the invitation to her family members.

“The Emperor Star Academy, welcomes your enrolment.” The representative standing beside Mustang, after hearing the invitations made by the other representatives, couldn’t tolerate it any longer as he too extended an invitation – causing the placid expression on Autumn Snow, to finally break out into a smile. The four great academies had all extended an invitation to her.

Autumn Snow didn’t responded immediately. She turned her body, and calmly stated as she looked to Qin Wentian, “Do you understand now?”

“Understand what?” Qin Wentian asked back.

“Our so called marriage engagement, in the face of the absolute disparity between us, is nothing but a joke. In the future, just peacefully live out your life and be a ordinary human.” Autumn Snow calmly continued, “My life and yours, from the start, we were destined to be two parallel lines, never to intersect.”

After saying that, Autumn Snow turned her body back and walked forward. The gazes of all the spectators were on her, curious about the choice she would make.

“Wait!” At this moment, a voice could be heard, causing Autumn Snow to once again cast her glance towards Qin Wentian. Traces of

a smile could be seen in his eyes, causing Autumn Snow to freeze involuntarily.

“Your examination has ended, but what about me? I haven’t even started.” Qin Wentian tranquilly stated, causing Autumn Snow to raise her eyebrows. Qin Wentian wanted to attempt the examination too?

Qin Wentian proceeded forward, arriving in front of the enormous drum. Currently, his cultivation level was at the 5th level of the Body Refinement Realm. Even with the tremendous boosting effect from his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, his strength would still have a disparity when compared to Autumn Snow. But now, he had no choice but to go all out, staking his life on the line.

The disparity between the 5th and the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm was extremely immense. A normal cultivator at the 5th level would only possess a strength level of 25 bulls. As for Qin Wentian, he was a special case. He had broken through to the 5th level of the Body Refinement Realm by only absorbing Astral Qi. And as a Stellar Martial Cultivator, with the aid of the boosting effects from the tyrannical Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, he was able to display twice the level of strength when compared to an ordinary 5th level Body Refinement Realm Martial Cultivator, reaching the strength level of 50 bulls.

In addition to that, with the Dragon Subduing Fist he’d recently cultivated, Qin Wentian was able to boost his current strength level to another level, further shortening the distance between him and Autumn Snow. And thus, this time round, he was prepared to

exert himself to the utmost.

“Hmph!” Talon’s coldly snorted. If Qin Wentian was unable to cause the drumbeat to reverberate at least three times, he would definitely teach him a lesson.

Mustang narrowed his eyes in laughter, it was as though he knew that a lion — the king of the beasts — was about to rise.

And Qin Chuan, who was sitting in the grandstand, underwent a myriad of changes in his expressions. Did Wentian really manage to solve the problem of his crippled meridians, and finally step onto the pathway of cultivation?

Qin Wentian glanced at the enormous drum ahead, and entered into an altered state of mind – a realm of thoughtlessness, forgetting everything. It was as though he had transferred all the negative emotions within him, onto the enormous drum in front of him.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian erupted into motion, his fist was like a raging wind, as he struck out onto the drum.

“Boom, Boom, Boom...” The drumbeat sounded out three times. Although there was nothing astonishing about this, it still caused many in the audience to be dumbstruck. Wasn’t Qin Wentian someone who had crippled meridians? He had actually managed to reach the 3rd reverberation. This signified that he at least had the strength level of 30 bulls.

“Wentian!” Qin Chuan shuddered violently, the sound of these three drumbeats, was akin to heavenly music in his ears, causing his soul to shiver in delight

Beside Qin Chuan, Qin Yao clenched her hands into fists. Her brother, had actually managed to cause the 3rd reverberation.

Talon, Bai Qingsong, Autumn Snow and the rest went slack jawed, as shock suffused their features. However, they soon recovered. Wasn’t it only three reverberations? It meant he only had the strength level of 30 bulls. Maybe he had absorbed the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth and cultivated as a Martial Cultivator.

In Qin Wentian’s body, cracking sounds could be heard. His body was flooded with infinite strength as his Stellar Meridians transformed into a spiral tunnel, gathering Astral Energy crazily, causing the gathered Astral Energy to flow through all his energy channels, all the way to his arm, infusing the fist of his with herculean might.

“Raging Dragon Leaving the Oceans!” Qin Wentian roared. At this moment, he was comparable to a ferocious dragon, explosively bursting out of the oceans. Gathering boundless might in his fist, he mercilessly struck at the drum again.

“Boom....” The intense sound of the drumbeat was like thunder that shocked the heavens, causing pain to the eardrums of the spectators.

“Boom, Boom, Boom..” The drumbeats reverberated unceasingly,

the sound emitted, rang out in the four directions, and the full force of the blow was not fully expended yet.

Qin Wentian was fully immersed in that state, as if he was one with the drums. That terrifying surge of rebound energy, redirected back to his body, caused his soul to vibrate with it. Crackling sounds rang out unceasingly as his bones structure underwent a baptism under the pressure. It was as though he was undergoing impurities cleansing, leaving him only with a extremely revitalising feeling — he was in the midst of a breakthrough!

Despite that, the sounds in his body were masked by the reverberation of the drumbeats, and just as the 5th reverberation rang out, all the spectators were thunderstruck. Qin Wentian had actually caused five reverberations! Not only that, there were still some lingering aftermath that hinted at the possibility of the 6th reverberation.

Hints of excitement appeared in Qin Wentian's eyes. Never had he expected to breakthrough to the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm in this examination. Seems like the Astral Energy from the Yuan Meteor Stone were not wasted indeed.

“Excellent!”, Qin Chuan cried out joyfully. Five reverberations, which meant that Wentian had the strength level of 50 bulls.

The sleeping genius, had finally awakened.

“He actually managed to reach the 5th reverberation.” Bai

Qingsong and the rest were still in shock. This was beyond their expectations, Qin Wentian was actually that talented?

“Not only did you forbid me from absorbing the Yuan Qi of Heaven and Earth, you actually hid the fact from me, and secretly cultivated the Yuan Qi from Heaven and Earth, reaching your current cultivation level today. How ridiculous.” Autumn Snow glared at Qin Wentian. With his strength level of 50 bulls, Qin Wentian’s cultivation should be at the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm, or even higher. However, she was sure that Qin Wentian had not managed to condense an Astral Soul yet.

Autumn Snow could never have imagined that Qin Wentian only used a span of 7 days to reach his current level of cultivation. In addition, she would also not be able to imagine that he was in fact, the purest Stellar Martial Cultivator, with no taint of Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi in his system, and condensed an Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer, coupled with the fact that his body, compared to others in the same level, was even more perfect as a result of enduring hellish pain through his Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique. There was no way for her to imagine how immense the boosting effect would be.

“Pitiful.” Qin Wentian lightly stated, as he glanced at Autumn Snow. In that instance, Astral Light blossomed in radiant splendor – an Astral Soul, with a faint golden halo, in the shape of a gigantic hammer could be seen materializing atop of Qin Wentian’s forehead. That halo produced was even brighter and more resplendent than the Astral Soul of Autumn Snow. The energy that emanated from it, was also countless times more terrifying.

“Boom!” Suddenly, a thunderous sound rang out. Oh God, it was an Astral Soul, Qin Wentian, not only did he possessed a strength level of 50 bulls, he was also a Stellar Martial Cultivator.

One must know that, earlier, when Qin Wentian had his affinity for the Astral Qi tested, he had achieved a 9-star talent rating.

“That Astral Soul was even brighter than the halo of Autumn Snow’s. Surely, it must have originated from the 3rd Heavenly Layer or higher.” The hearts of the spectators were all trembling in awe.

A 9-star rating for affinity for Astral Qi, and he had condensed an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. At this moment, Qin Wentian was the one that caused the crowd to focus their gazes on him. As for Autumn Snow, it was as if she had been shunted to the side, becoming something insignificant.

“Excellent, Excellent!” Qin Chuan could not hold back his joy any longer as he loudly exclaimed. It was as if all the sadness and depression in his heart had been spat out. It was too satisfying! A 9-star talent, as well as an Astral Soul condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer!

“Who said that my son Wentian was unworthy of Autumn Snow. Is Autumn Snow even worthy enough for him?!” Qin Chuan coldly stated, gazing at Bai Qingsong. At this moment, the countenance of Bai Qingsong was extremely ugly to behold, it was as if he dared not believed what was happening before his eyes. How was this possible?

The representatives from the four great academies, had sat down after Autumn Snow finished displaying her might. However, at this moment, they all stood up again, gazing at the blinding Astral Soul atop of Qin Wentian's forehead. How radiant, how resplendent.

“Hu... a monster is born.” Mustang deeply sucked in a huge breath, as his gaze heated up. He was the first to discover the talent of Qin Wentian. To think that now, the sleeping dragon had finally awakened.

“The Emperor Star Academy, welcomes your enrolment.” Mustang warmly smiled, and extended the invitation to Qin Wentian.

However it was as though Qin Wentian had not heard the invitation. His gaze was riveted on Autumn Snow, as a cold smile hung from his lips, “I wish to question the Bai Clan: When did I ever have bad intentions towards Autumn Snow? And as for you, Autumn Snow, do you even have the abilities needed to guide me?”

As the sound of his voice faded away, Qin Wentian drew in a huge breath. The Astral Energy within him, formed a terrifying spiral, surging frantically, enveloping his entire arm. The Astral Energy contained within his arm was saturated to the point where it almost exploded. Qin Wentian's fist flickered between the forms of a heavenly hammer, and that of a soaring dragon. Emanating an overbearing, extremely tyrannical aura, and containing herculean might, his fist swung onto the surface of the gigantic drum. This strike of his, was his ultimate, containing all the strength he

possessed.

“Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom!” Both the skies and earth shuddered, as the thunderous drumbeats shocked the heavens. The sound of the reverberations rang out continuously, with no intentions of stopping.

“Boom!” The 6th reverberation, it was as though 10,000 horses was galloping at insane speed, causing tremors in the hearts of the spectators.

“Boom!”, when the 7th reverberation rang out, everyone in the audience was flabbergasted, Qin Wentian had matched the record of Autumn Snow with this strike.

What was even more terrifying, was that there was still a lingering sound, as if the drumbeats had no intention of ceasing.

“Boom!” As the 8th reverberation rang out, it was as though the thunderous sound had stolen the hearing of the crowd. The spectators only felt a strong gust of wind, from the aftermath of that reverberation, blow upon their face, as they felt numbness in their hearts. The wind also blew on the face of Autumn Snow. The 8th reverberation. Qin Wentian had broken her record! It was as though she had been slapped heavily by that gust of wind. How shocking.

“Next, in the second round of the examination, i will truly show you how great the divide is between you and me.”

“My life and yours, from the start, we were destined to be two parallel lines, never to intersect.”

The prideful words of Autumn Snow lingered in the air. However, how weak did those prideful words sounded now.

The earlier brilliance of Autumn Snow had diminished almost into nothingness, as the 8th reverberation rang out. Be it in terms of talent, or strength, she had no way to compete with Qin Wentian.

The gaze of Mustang grew heated as he drew in a deep breath. Decisiveness could be seen flickering in his eyes, as he stated, “The Emperor Star Academy retracts their earlier invitation to Autumn Snow. Qin Wentian, I represent the Emperor Star Academy, and sincerely extend an invitation for you to join us.”

The other representatives beside Mustang glanced at him, while their expressions flickered. However, in their hearts, they agreed with his decision. Two geniuses — obviously, Qin Wentian was the more brilliant one. Forsaking Autumn Snow for Qin Wentian, was the right choice to make.

“The Emperor Star Academy, because of Qin Wentian, has actually rejected Autumn Snow!” This decision left many in the crowds gasping as their hearts trembled. At this moment, sounds of discussion broke out amongst the crowd. The show today was indeed fascinating.

AGM 014 – Choice

Qin Wentian stood there, with his gaze fixed onto Autumn Snow. Contained within his gaze, were traces of a spirited look — the spirited look containing the hot-bloodedness of youth.

Were it not for the fact that he'd broken through to the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm, it would've been almost impossible for him to sound out the 8th reverberation. Ordinary cultivators of the 6th level, only possessed a strength level of 36 bulls, Qin Wentian — as he possessed the incomparably tyrannical Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, as well as the gathered force provided to him by the Stellar Meridians in his body — used the combination of these two factors in order to allow him to double his might, compared to normal cultivators. Taking into account the effect of force amplification that arose from his Dragon Subduing Fists, he managed to reach the strength level of 80 bulls. That explosive might was focused on a single fist, like a raging wind – it was a single strike with the force of 80 bulls. How terrifying.

Qin Wentian stared at Autumn Snow silently, not saying a word. The resplendent halo of the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul that he released was more effective at achieving the persuasive effect, when compared to the other's means of communication.

He, Qin Wentian, used his actions to prove himself to Autumn Snow. Who was it that was not worthy of whom?

Autumn Snow at this moment felt only numbness in her heart. Even during the moment that the 8th reverberation sounded out, when the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul materialized, she was still

unable to believe her eyes. Qin Wentian's talent, was by far many times more monstrous when compared to hers.

Today, all of the powerful academies of the Royal Capital were gathered here at the Bai Residence. The Bai Clan initially wanted to borrow this opportunity to announce, to the entire Sky Harmony City, the world-shaking talent of Autumn Snow. They wanted to borrow the astonishing effect of Autumn Snow enrolling in the Emperor Star Academy to tell everyone that, she, Autumn Snow, was someone that Qin Wentian could never be worthy of. Qin Wentian had merely been hitching a ride on the back of a phoenix, currying favor with someone more powerful than him.

If the Qin Wentian today, was still the same as Qin Wentian of the past, a trash that was unable to cultivate, the plans of the Bai Clan would surely have been successful. They wanted to tell everyone that Qin Wentian wasn't even worthy to carry the shoes of Autumn Snow, let alone be her husband. That was a grave humiliation to Autumn Snow.

If at that point, Qin Wentian from the Qin Clan still wanted to marry Autumn Snow, that was nothing but an impractical fool's dream..

Regretfully, the truth of the events unfolding, was much more fascinating than what was originally planned. After all that had transpired today, who would still say that Qin Wentian was not worthy of Autumn Snow? A 9-star Astral talent, condensing an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, causing 8 reverberations to sound out — who would still dare to look down on him?

“Qin Wentian, to think that you’ve actually hidden your cultivation level, how scheming.” Bai Qingsong coldly glared at Qin Wentian. This matter had already escalated to a level beyond his control, there was no use for regret. In anycase, he still had his arms wrapped around the gigantic tree that was the Ye Clan. Bai Qingsong believed that Autumn Snow wouldn’t lose out much when compared to Qin Wentian. After all, the Ye Clan was a clan with power and authority only superseded by the Royal Clan.

Qin Wentian inclined his head as he looked at Bai Qingsong speechlessly. The truly scheming one was none other than him. How could Bai Qingsong’s personality be so twisted and dark. How laughable.

“Seven days ago, I aided Autumn Snow in condensing her Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. It enabled Autumn Snow, in the span of a single night, to have her name become famous as it resounded throughout the Chu Country. I was happy, because I helped her, and in turn caused her to be happy.”

“However, not even in my dreams could I have imagined, almost immediately afterwards, that your attitude towards me would completely change. Getting your guards to imprison me... However, I still naively believed that there was a mistake. I intended to condensed my Astral Soul on the day of your birthday celebration, wanting to give you a surprise and bring you joy. But to think that the loving and caring uncle Bai actually brought his men over, wanting to kill me.”

“And, what’s even more ludicrous, are your motives for killing me. Because of the antagonistic relationship between the Qin Clan

and the Ye Clan, you planned to use my death to curry favor with the Ye Clan, proclaiming your allegiance, and obviously, to pave the road for the marriage agreement between Autumn Snow and Ye WuQue.”

“I dared not believe that the kind and loving Uncle Bai, whom I interacted closely with for three years, was actually such a vile character. Hence, I cultivated relentlessly, to the point of forgetting food and drink, all for the sake of condensing my Astral Soul earlier, sneaking out of the Bai Residence whilst fearing for my life. And today, in this place, Autumn Snow and you actually said that I was scheming, and had been hiding my cultivation level. How ridiculous.”

Qin Wentian explained, with a righteous aura emanating forth from him, exposing the truth of the matter to everyone in the audience. The members of the audience looked at Qin Wentian. Only now, did it seem that their perspective had somewhat shifted. Qin Wentian, in their perception, somehow seemed to stand taller as the halo surrounding his Astral Soul glowed with an even brighter light. While comparatively, the halo of Autumn Snow seemed to dim as it lost its luster.

The Bai Clan was too despicable.

“Wentian, in these three years, our Qin Clan’s treatment of the Bai Clan could be clearly witnessed by all the people in the Sky Harmony City. However, they’ve disregarded the kindness we’ve shown, and have actually stooped to such actions. There’s no need to be magnanimous with them — the more tolerant you are, the more they’ll step over your head.”

Atop the grandstand, Qin Chuan coldly said with a hint of regret, after hearing what Qin Wentian had said. He slowly descended from the grandstand and walked to the training grounds, before continuing, “This despicable dogsh*t of a Clan. How laughable was it that me, Qin Chuan, must’ve been blinded. To think that I agreed to the earlier marriage engagement between my son and them. This was all my fault. As for Autumn Snow, what qualities does she have, to be worthy of my son, Qin Wentian?”

As the sound of his voice faded away, a terrifying surge of energy begin to gush forth from his body. Instantly, the pressure caused by the terrifying surge of energy, began to warp the space surrounding Qin Chuan.

Qin Chuan extended his palms, when suddenly, that terrifying surge of energy begin to gather and condense into the form of a great sword. Slashing the space in the direction of the training grounds, the great sword swept through the air. The force of that strike caused many of the spectators to feel a chill in their hearts.

“Three years ago, I agreed to the marriage engagement between the Qin and the Bai Clan, that was a grave mistake. Today, my Qin Clan, wants to take this chance to announce this to the entire Sky Harmony City. This marriage engagement is hereby dissolved. Autumn Snow, in this lifetime, will never be able to step half-a-step into my Qin Clan.”

In the midst of the air, silence descended. Today, who was it that wanted to dissolve the marriage engagement?

The victor was the king, the loser was the bandit. Talent, could determine everything. Today, obviously Qin Wentian was the victor. The Qin Clan openly wanted to annul the marriage engagement, so who would still dare to question their actions? If today, the opposite occurred instead — Qin Wentian was still unable to cultivate — and the Bai Clan wanted to annul the engagement, who would've dared to question their actions?

The anger that could be seen burning on Autumn Snow's visage, slowly distorted into something unsightly. Today was supposed to be the day where she exhibited her world-shaking talent, letting others know that Qin Wentian was unworthy of her. However, the monstrous talent of Qin Wentian, beyond her expectations, caused everything to be the opposite of what she'd planned. And Qin Chuan words, to Autumn Snow, was a slap to her face — a grave humiliation!

And in addition, Mustang had rejected Autumn Snow because of Qin Wentian.

Today was the day where she was supposed to be bathed in radiance, but instead, it had become a day filled with disgrace and humiliation. All this happened because of one person. The person which she initially wanted to humiliate, had surpassed her.

"Qin Wentian!" Autumn Snow shrilly exclaimed, as her icy gaze became fixated on Qin Wentian.

"The humiliation you gave me today, I will return it back to you manifolds in the future." The intensity of the coldness in her tone, seeped deep into one's bones, as determination shone in her eyes.

Never had she expect that her supposedly most glorious day, had turned out to be the day of her biggest humiliation.

“I humiliated you?” Qin Wentian laughed, “Given your Bai Clan’s treatment of me, you still have the face to utter such words. Wasn’t the humiliation you suffered today, all caused by your own hands? If your Bai Clan wasn’t so despicable, and hadn’t stooped to such a level, wouldn’t the events that happened today not have happened?”

The crowd glanced about, as they silently agreed. What Qin Wentian said wasn’t wrong, the humiliation of Autumn Snow today, was because of what the Bai Clan had wanted to do to Qin Wentian. It was only after Qin Wentian displayed his shocking talent, that the Bai Clan suffered from the consequences of their own actions.

Qin Wentian calmly gazed at Autumn Snow, before closing his eyes and stated, “From now onwards, you and me, including the Bai Clan... our past relations are all severed. If in the future, you still wish to play your little tricks, to humiliate and anger me, I will gladly oblige. Don’t blame me for being ruthless then!”

“Scram!” Qin Wentian roared with rage, as his voice became akin to the waves of the ocean, crashing onto Autumn Snow’s face. Just the word “Scram!” was like a slap right to her face.

Glaring at Qin Wentian, Autumn Snow went silent for a moment, before she stated, “I, Autumn Snow, accept the Royal Academy’s invitation, and am willing to join the Royal Academy.”

When Seifer heard Autumn Snow's words, he didn't feel as excited as he imagined he would be. He coldly cast a glance at Talon who was standing at his side, causing Talon's expression to become unsightly. As per what they'd wished for, they'd managed to obtain Autumn Snow's acceptance, and should've been very excited by right. After all, the reason they were here was because of Autumn Snow.

However, because they had discovered an even more monstrous talent, and not to mention that that talent also had enmity against Autumn Snow — it caused all their excitement to diminish to the lowest level.

“Talon, look at what you've done.” Seifer coldly intoned, causing Talon's heart to shudder. Seifer knew that Talon must've done something that offended Qin Wentian. Even if he now wanted to snatch Qin Wentian from the Emperor Star Academy, there was no hope for him. As such, they could only choose to accept Autumn Snow, trying to salvage something from this mess. If not, they wouldn't even be able gain a single genius.

Autumn Snow saw that both Seifer and Talon, instead of showing expressions of welcome on their faces, were murmuring something in a low voice instead, causing her to be ashamed and resentful.

“Autumn Snow, we welcome your enrolment. During spring next year, bring this along with you to register.” Seifer waved his hands, and a golden medallion flew towards Autumn Snow. Autumn Snow caught the medallion squarely, and on it were only

two words inscribed – Royal Clan. The soaring of the dragon and the dance of the phoenix, how awe-inspiring.

“Qin Wentian, the road in the future is still long.” Autumn Snow tightly clutched the medallion from the Royal Academy, and silently vowed that in the future, she must cleanse all the shame and humiliation that had occurred today.

“Qin Wentian, my Divine Wind Academy is willing to offer you twice the benefits of what we offered to Autumn Snow.”

“The same goes for my Seven Star Academy.” That moment, the representatives from both the Divine Wind Academy, and the Seven Star Academy spoke. The importance they attached to Qin Wentian, was twice that of Autumn Snow. After today, Qin Wentian’s name was bound to resonate throughout the Sky Harmony City.

“Qin Wentian, my Emperor Star Academy would never make you any promises. Just merely the name of our academy, the Emperor Star Academy, would be the best promise.” Mustang calmly stated. This was his confidence, that the name and reputation of the Emperor Star Academy represented everything.

When the crowd hear Mustang’s solemn words, they could only shake their heads. The Emperor Star Academy was indeed extraordinary.

However, Qin Wentian’s gaze was directed towards the Divine Wind Academy and the Seven Stars Academy, causing Mustang’s

heart to skip a bit, as depression set in. Although his words were beautiful, Qin Wentian was a youth after all, and would most likely be seduced by the immediate benefits dangled in front of him, he should've been more accommodating and lavish with his conditions offered instead!

“Damn it, no way. There is just no way we can lose such a genius that we are so close to obtaining.” Mustang murmured in his heart. Once again putting on a solemn expression, Mustang stated “Of course, if you have any requests, I would do my best to fulfil them. The conditions we offer would definitely not be any worse off than what the other academies are offering.”

“Eh...” When the words were spoken, all the spectators were in a daze, even Qin Wentian. However, he swiftly recovered. This Mustang was interesting indeed. Despite doing so, Qin Wentian, with his body slightly bent in a bow, was still facing the representatives from the Divine Wind and Seven Stars Academies.

“Qin Wentian, whatever conditions you want, just tell me, I will agree to all of them!” Mustang frantically stated, as his fake looks crumbled away, pitifully looking at Qin Wentian. Even if he threw away all his face here, he still didn't want to lose a genius such as Qin Wentian.

“.....” Those who saw the expression on Mustang, all had rivulets of sweat flowing down their faces. Was this still the same man earlier who solemnly stated that the three words, Emperor-Star-Academy, would already be the best promise? Damn it !

“Qin Wentian, truly thanks both the Divine Wind Academy, as

well as the Seven Stars Academy, for their great affection.” The words spoken by Qin Wentian, almost caused Mustang’s heart to leap out of his throat.

“It is only that I, of the junior generation, have already sown karma with the Emperor Star Academy. Therefore, my choice is the Emperor Star Academy.” Qin Wentian simply said, as he inclined his head, with a face filled with the trace of a smile.

Both the Divine Wind and the Seven Stars Academy were all greatly disappointed, but they too, understood the reason behind the choice. “This man, other than possessing heaven-shaking talent, is humble and righteous too. He is someone that Autumn Snow couldn’t possibly compete against, and is sure to accomplish great things in the future.

“Right, we hope that you will become the pinnacle of your generation one day.” Both parties wished Qin Wentian well.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian gratefully accepted their blessings as he stole a glance at Mustang. Mustang was at the side, rolling his eyes at Qin Wentian, before lowly intoning, “You smelly little brat, when we arrive at the academy, you’ll see how I’m going to fix you..”

“Haha, Brother Mustang, I’ll be leaving this kid in your hands.” Qin Chuan knew that Mustang had no malice despite his words, and thus laughed uproariously. His laughter eventually infected Mustang, who stood there laughing together with him. Today... what a great day. It seemed like the future was going to be interesting.

AGM 015 – Imperial Edict

For the birthday celebration of Bai Qingsong, people had arrived from the Royal Capital — the Bai Residence was also the gathering place for the representatives of the four great academies. And yet, in the end, the one who shined the most, wasn't the Bai Clan, not Autumn Snow, but was instead Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian had obtained an invitation to enroll in the prestigious Emperor Star Academy, while Autumn Snow could only enter the Royal Academy. This ending was not a joyous occasion for many. Because of such an ending, only Mustang and those from the Qin Clan were able to feel happy. However, the rest of the spectators on the grandstand — the Ye Clan, the Silver Feather Legion, as well as those clans from the Royal Capital — all had their original hopes and wishes dashed.

Old Master Ye, as well as those that hailed from the Royal Capital, felt extremely frustrated and unhappy about this ending at this moment. After all, the reason why they'd come with the intention of congratulating the Bai Clan, was all because they'd give face to the Ye Clan. Because today was supposed to be the day where Autumn Snow displayed her talent, as well as broke off the marriage engagement with the Qin Clan, and publicly humiliated them while severing all their relations. More importantly, today was also supposed to be the day where the Bai Clan and the Ye Clan discussed their marriage engagement.

Yet, the things that had happened today, went directly against the plans that they'd had.

The old master of the Ye Clan looked at the excited people of the Qin Clan, before indifferently glancing sideways at Bai Qingsong, and asked, “What? You’re that easily shaken?”

Bai Qingsong’s expression trembled, as he looked at Old Master Ye. After witnessing the might displayed by Qin Wentian today, although Bai Qingsong hated him, he couldn’t deny that he was somewhat shaken. If the events of the past few days hadn’t occurred, maybe, it truly would be like what Qin Wentian had said. Today, when Qin Wentian had unleashed his Astral Soul, the brilliance of the Bai Clan would’ve been even more dazzling, and the marriage between Qin Wentian and Autumn Snow would surely have been a story that captured the imagination, and was spread far and wide.

“Father.” That moment, Autumn Snow walked over to the side of Bai Qingsong, and glanced at her father, a desolate look evident in her eyes.

“The Ye Clan will temporarily delay our announcement about the marriage engagement.” Old Master Ye levelled his gaze at both of them, as he lowly intoned, causing both Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow to stiffen. Today, the words spoken by Qin Chuan had caused Autumn Snow’s name and face to be dragged through the mud. If the Ye Clan still insisted on proposing a marriage engagement, wouldn’t people say that the Ye Clan were accepting goods that others had abandoned?

“But.....” Bai Qingsong’s expressions grew nasty. Today, the enmity between Bai Clan and the Qin Clan had already worsened to a state of no return. If they lost the protection of this “big tree”,

the Ye Clan, it would be tough for the Bai Clan to survive in the Sky Harmony City in the future. And moreover, the humiliation Qin Wentian had caused Autumn Snow earlier, combined with the Ye Clan's actions, in addition to the actions of the four great academies earlier, and finally adding in the psychological impact on Autumn Snow... it would be akin to adding frost on top of snow, or pouring oil into a fire.

“There's no need for buts, I will arrange everything. I will make the Qin Clan become history.” Old Master Ye gently said, as a frosty expression flashed in his eyes, causing both Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow to shudder in their hearts. The Ye Clan, was a tough customer to handle indeed — much different from the Qin Clan.

“Autumn Snow, you must work hard on your cultivation.” Bai Qingsong silently exclaimed in his heart. Autumn Snow was able to understand what Bai Qingsong's eyes conveyed, as her hands clenched tightly into fists. Today, the Ye Clan had delayed the marriage engagement announcement. In the future, she'd make the Ye Clan regret their actions today — she definitely would. The Qin Clan too, including Qin Wentian.

As their gaze swept past the Qin Clan, Old Master Ye and the rest once again set their eyes on the excited people of the Qin Clan, before Old Master Ye coldly stated, “Just merely displaying some talent could cause them to be excited to such a degree. No wonder that, after their Ancestor Qin Wu disappeared, the Qin Clan began their decline. Each generation has gotten successively worse than the others, to the state it's at today, and yet they show no signs of regret. How pitiful.”

Qin Chuan's expression abruptly turned unsightly, as he turned his sharp gaze upon the grandstand. The decline of the Qin Clan was known to all. If the emperor wanted the Qin Clan to decline, how could they not decline? The status and power wielded by the Ye Clan had also risen at that time. The emperor wanted to make use of the Ye Clan to suppress the Qin Clan, using the Qin Clan as their stepping stone. So that on the surface, the emperor didn't need to personally act.

"9-star affinity for Astral Qi, and the first Astral Soul he condensed was from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Ye WuQue from the Ye Clan, isn't he just so-so. To think that you'd say something like this at this moment. Laughable." Qin Chuan glared at the old man up on the grandstand, as he coldly replied.

"Ridiculous." Old Master Ye calmly replied, as he stated, "Ye WuQue opened his 2nd Astral Gate and condensed his 2nd Astral Soul which was from the 3rd Heavenly Layer at the age of 15. I'm afraid that Qin Wentian at the age of 15, was still bitterly training his mediation technique in order to increase his affinity. How can he still be comparable to Ye WuQue?"

Hidden within the calm voice of Old Master Ye, were hints of unshakable conviction, as the crowd of spectators frowned slightly. Meditation could indeed increase one's affinity towards the Astral Constellations. And there were indeed plenty of people who delayed their condensation of Astral Souls due to this reason. It seemed like Autumn Snow and Qin Wentian belonged to this group, and thus, they were indeed weaker when compared to Ye WuQue.

“Ye WuQue from the Ye Clan is too dazzling, so far beyond reach.” The hearts of the crowd were thinking. Ye WuQue was a monster that had a high possibility to step into the Yuanfu Realm before the age of 20.

Qin Chuan had no way to refute this after hearing the words of his counterpart. After all, Qin Wentian had just embarked onto the path of cultivation.

No one knew that Qin Wentian’s first Astral Soul was condensed from a constellation from the 5th Heavenly Layer. And, how many days had he taken to achieve what he had today?

“But.....” at this moment, only to hear that Old Master Ye continued saying, as he looked at Qin Wentian, “Qin Wentian does indeed possess extraordinary talent, and has condensed an Astral Soul, worthy of nurturing. However, the best place to nurture him was not the Emperor Star Academy, but the Chu Country’s Godly General Military Palace instead.”

“Impossible.” Qin Chuan rejected immediately, “Qin Wentian’s choice belonged to himself, the Ye Clan has no rights to interfere.”

Those in the crowd that had more experience, had their pupils contracted. The Godly General Military Palace was a place that specially nurtured elites for the Chu Country’s army. That place was only opened to those with peak-level talents within the army, and had never accepted outsiders.

Back when Qin Wu swept unchallenged across the Chu Country,

other than having heavenly might, there was also another important reason – and that was that Qin Wu was a controller at the Godly General Military Palace. However, back when the emperor forced the Qin Clan to decline, one of the first moves he made was to obtain control over the military palace. Currently, the emperor's powers were already firmly entrenched inside the Godly General Military Palace. How could Qin Wentian still enter there?

“Hmph, Qin Wu, a man who was loyal to his country, that had created the Godly General Military Palace. To think that his descendants have now all forgotten about him — that they are unwilling to enter the Godly General Palace. Isn't that equivalent to humiliating your own ancestor?” Old Master Ye coldly snorted. Now, even Mustang was infuriated. To think that the Ye Clan still had such a sinister move.

“Qin Wentian has already agreed to join my Emperor Star Academy. But now, you, Ye Mo, are trying to get him to join the Godly General Military Palace. What is the meaning of this?” Mustang asked as his voice turned increasingly colder.

“Qin Wentian has not officially joined the Emperor Star Academy yet, which means he still has freedom, and thus cannot be considered a student of the Emperor Star Academy.” Ye Mo stared directly at Mustang, as he tranquilly stated. “And thus, wherever he joins is still undecided. Moreover, the request for Qin Wentian to join the Godly General Military Palace wasn't my decision.”

As he was explaining this, the lips of Ye Mo curled into a cold smile, as he looked to Icehawk, who was standing by his side. Icehawk understood his meaning intuitively, as he stood up and

walked forward, withdrawing a edict, before smiling coldly at Qin Chuan, “This is his Majesty’s imperial edict. Do you want me to read it out, or do you want to see it for yourself personally?”

Qin Chuan froze. The emperor had finally made his move, dealing a critical strike to the Qin Clan.

So the true reason behind Ye Mo and Icehawk coming to the Sky Harmony City wasn’t for the sake of Autumn Snow. It was for the Qin Clan

“Read it out.” Qin Chuan’s heart went cold.

Icehawk grinned coldly, “In the past, Qin Wu’s fame resounded throughout the entire country, his military exploits illustrious. Although the previous emperor bestowed Qin Wu a title, as the Wu King, it was still insufficient to address his merits. And now, to think that the Qin Clan has gradually declined, it has brought shame to their Ancestor. His Majesty has decreed that if there were any outstanding talents in the Qin Clan, Icehawk is to directly send the talents to the Godly General Military Palace for cultivation. And as for the elites of the private army of the Qin Clan, Icehawk is hereby granted the power to lead the Silver Feather Legion, to allow them to join the Silver Feather Legion. For those who resist, Icehawk is to conduct the execution together with Ye Mo.”

The crowd of spectators, after hearing the imperial edict, involuntarily shuddered. What a cunning plan, to praise the past merits of the Qin Clan Ancestor, while pulling out any roots of future hope in the Qin Clan, by taking all the talented youths away. To think that they even wanted to destroy the private army

of the Qin Clan. This way, there was no more hope left for the Qin Clan.

“If my Ancestor knew of this, he would surely say thanks his Majesty for his love.” Qin Chuan gave up, as he calmed down, before making a sarcastic remark.

The billions of people of the Chu Country all belonged to clans with different levels of authority and power. The Royal Clan was naturally the strongest power in the Chu Country, but they usually wouldn't disrupt the matters of the other clans in the country. However, the Qin Clan was different. The Qin Clan was a military clan that belonged to the Chu Country. As such, the Royal Clan could issue commands and imperial orders to the Qin Clan, who had the responsibility to obey.

Qin Wentian who was beside Qin Chuan, felt a wave of despair. This time around, both the Ye Clan and Icehawk had come with preparations. And as luck would have it, they'd witnessed him displaying his talent at the training grounds earlier. How could the Ye Clan give up on such an opportunity?

“In the past, the Emperor, using the title of Wu King, banished the Qin Clan to the Sky Harmony City. And now, they are also prepared to steal away the hope of the Qin Clan under the pretext of that imperial edict.” Qin Wentian silently speculated in his heart. If the Qin Clan didn't obey, it meant that they wanted to defy the imperial order. And if so, at that time, the military troops which Icehawk brought would surely take action.

AGM 016 – Unusual Disposition

The reaction of the Qin Clan's members were all observed and monitored by Ye Mo and Icehawk. However, the expression of Ye Mo was incomparably indifferent, before he stated again, "The kindness and grace of his Majesty has been bestowed upon Qin Yao, Qin Shang, and Qin Zhi. The three of you will be given leave to withdraw from your various academies, and join the Godly General Military Palace instead."

"What?" Qin Shang's countenance turned pale, while Qin Yao's beautiful eyes flashed mysteriously. Were they planning to catch all in one net? Currently, within the Qin Clan, Qin Yao, Qin Shang, and Qin Zhi were the only three that were cultivating in the capital of Chu.

"For this, Seifer can prove my words." Ye Mo indifferently said, as the gaze of the crowd, including Talon, landed on Seifer from the Royal Academy. Apparently Talon had no foreknowledge of this news.

"As per what he said, his Majesty has already sent people to inform all the academies about the withdrawal of the Qin scions." Seifer stated. After which, the hearts of the members of the Qin Clan had all sunk into a valley. What a ruthless emperor, he was really intending to wipe out all future hope of the Qin Clan in one fell swoop.

"Coincidentally, today, everyone in the Qin Clan is here at this place, including Qin Yao and the rest, and Qin Wentian. All of them shall come with me to the Godly General Military Palace.

Since it was ordered by his Majesty himself, the Godly General Military Palace will be sure to nurture their talents well.” The gaze of Icehawk was still as sharp as a sword, his purpose for coming to the Sky Harmony City today, indeed had nothing to do with Autumn Snow — his true purpose was to target the Qin Clan.

“The graces of his Majesty, we deeply appreciate it. However, the Qin Clan has not concerned themselves with the matters of the country for many years, and has no wish to do so now, or in the future as well. We can only thank his Majesty for his kindness.” Qin Chuan replied with a heavy tone of voice, while staring at Ye Mo.

“Are you defying the imperial edict?” Icehawk brandished his spear, while emitting killing intent, pointing it straight at Qin Chuan.

“Icehawk.” Ye Mo shouted, while Icehawk lowered his spear. Ye Mo, with his hands behind his back, stated, “Qin Chuan, since his Majesty has entrusted this mission to me and Icehawk, I have to make sure it succeeds. If you really defy the imperial edict, with the kindly disposition of his Majesty, he might not do anything to you. But as for me, I would truly be put in a tough position. And hence, I urge you to accept the edict.”

“And if I say no?” Qin Chuan countered with another question.

Despite hearing the blunt sentence made by Qin Chuan, Ye Mo still indifferently stared at Qin Chuan. After a short instance, traces of a cold laughter appeared in his eyes as he said, “You can try it and see what would happen.”

“The men of Qin Clan.” Qin Chuan hollered, and instantly, surges of killing intent permeated the air. The troops of the Qin Clan were all ready, and had mounted their warhorses at a moment’s notice, as they directed their gazes, which were as sharp as swords, onto Ye Mo who was standing atop the grandstand, before roaring a single word, collectively together. “Here!”

The chilly atmosphere seemed to be affecting the temperature of the air. There were many in the crowd who were unable to bear it, as their expressions tightened. They had only one thought in mind – were it not for the Ye Clan acting in the shadows, even if Qin Wentian didn’t display his talents today, if the Bai Clan dared to humiliate the Qin Clan, they’d surely suffer a disaster.

“Return.” Qin Chuan coldly commanded, only saying a single sentence, as he pulled Qin Wentian atop his horse, before departing the training grounds.

The Qin Clan had tolerated the humiliation for too long. Today, their enemies had gone overboard, actually wanting the youths of the Qin Clan to be sent to their deaths.

Even if the Qin Clan were to be deemed traitors, there was no way that they could comply with the imperial edict.

Ye Mo watched the members of the Qin Clan depart, as he coldly smiled, “Icehawk, the Qin Clan has defied the imperial edict. You are hereby commanded to lead the Silver Feather Legion and surround the Qin Clan.”

“Right.” Icehawk nodded his head.

“And, with the imperial edict in hand, get the military command center in the Sky Harmony City to notify the Chu Dragon Guards to lockdown the Sky Harmony City. Use them to monitor the movements of the Qin Clan. Under no circumstances is any member of the Qin Clan allowed to take a step outside of Sky Harmony City.” Ye Mo continued, causing the hearts of the crowd to tremble. The Chu Dragon Guards were under the direct command of the Chu Emperor. Usually, they wouldn’t interfere in any matters, only those with the imperial edict would be able to mobilise them.

It was very obvious why the Chu Emperor had sent Ye Mo to the Sky Harmony City — it was to make sure that the Qin Clan would be finished for good.

Bai Qingsong, who was standing nearby, couldn’t help trembling silently as he witnessed how ruthless Ye Mo was. The Ye Clan was undoubtedly the clan with the most terrifying strength amongst those who resided in the Royal Capital. Their methods were many time more ruthless when compared to the Qin Clan. However, Bai Qingsong couldn’t help but to breath a sigh of relief as well. At the very least, the Bai Clan had no more need to worry about the revenge of the Qin Clan.

As for the marriage engagement between Ye WuQue and Autumn Snow, although he was concerned about it, he wasn’t overly bothered. As long as the Qin Clan was destroyed, even if there was no Ye WuQue, just based on Autumn Snow’s talent, there was no

need for her to be dependent on any man in order to transform into a phoenix among humans.

The representatives of the four great academies hadn't yet departed — each of them were lost in their own thoughts. While the expressions of both Seifer and Talon faintly had a hint of determination. Previously, when the emperor was drilling the soldiers, he'd discovered that the heart of the armies were not as one, and upon further analysis, he realised that despite Qin Wu's lack of presence, he still possessed an unignorable amount of influence. This matter was the final straw for the emperor, and thus, he decided to act against the Qin Clan.

Qin Wentian was from the Qin Clan, thus there was no way the Ye Clan would let him off that easily. Yet, their Royal Academy, had Autumn Snow. It was already sufficient. It seemed like they were the only ones who'd walked away with a good harvest.

Mustang had an unfathomable expression on his face. The relationship between the Emperor Star Academy and the Chu Country was extremely complicated. And today, using the fact that Qin Wentian had not officially joined the Emperor Star Academy yet, Ye Mo moved against the Qin Clan, severely limiting the actions Mustang could take. And more importantly, this was the Sky Harmony City, which wasn't his base of power. There was no way he could clash directly against the Ye Clan and the rest — and if he went back to the Emperor Star Academy to request for reinforcements, it'd already be too late.

Today, was a day of shock for many in the Sky Harmony City. Autumn Snow, as the number one genius in the city, was someone

that caused the representatives of the four prestigious academy to come for her, and at the same time, was prepared to use the name of her immense talent to humiliate the Qin Clan, as well as to break the previous marriage engagement.

Yet who would've thought, a youth that was unable to cultivate, the fiancée of Autumn Snow, Qin Wentian, had an even more monstrous talent, causing the representatives of the four great academies to fight over him, and eventually causing the Emperor Star Academy to reject Autumn Snow for him. After this, the name of the number one genius in the Sky Harmony City, belonged to none other but Qin Wentian. But now Ye Mo wanted to take action against the Qin Clan. The fate of this number one genius was thus, unknown.

Of course, this piece of shocking news only spreaded around within the Sky Harmony City. Because of the Chu Dragon Guards' interference, the city was locked, with no way for the news to be disseminated out – with the exception of those clans with great power that came from the Royal City. They were prepared to return with this news back to the Royal capital.

As for members of the Qin Clan, they had safely arrived back at the Qin Residence, yet, there was a heavy sense of pressure that hung about in the air. The important members of the Qin Clan had gathered around with knitted brows. The entirety of the Qin Clan was already surrounded by the Silver Feather Legion. As of now, the army of the Qin Clan was now in confrontation with the Silver Feather Legion.

“How could the Emperor be so ruthless, the Wu King bled and

sacrificed himself for the Chu Country and in the end, our ending is as such.

“As long as the Qin Clan still survives, I’m afraid that his Majesty would never rest easy. How regretful, our ancestors actually sold their lives for such a emperor.”

Within the Qin Residence, an aura of rage permeated the air, only to see Qin Chuan still remaining calm. He knew more compared to the others. The current emperor was frail of health, and to ensure that there’d be no unexpected circumstances when it came to abdicating the throne and choosing a new successor, there was no way such a dangerous element as the Qin Clan would be allowed to survive. The terrifying influence of Qin Wu was treated as such – a living time bomb.

“Now that things have reached such an impasse, rage and frustration won’t do any good. The only good thing about this situation, is that our Qin Clan actually produced such a genius.” Qin Chuan glanced at Qin Wentian, who was standing to the side, and patted him on the shoulder. “Wentian, today, you have fully unleashed all the negative emotions that were bottled up before.”

“You little brat, no wonder you were so full of confidence that day. You must’ve “forgotten” the important fact that you condensed an Astral Soul right? Not only did you hide it from me, you still secretly underwent two days of cultivation practice, to the point of forgetting food and drink.” Qin Yao rolled her eyes at Qin Wentian, as her eyes glittered with a radiant splendour.

Traces of laughter flashed past Qin Wentian’s eyes, but yet, his

heart was heavy. After all these years, he had long treated himself as part of the Qin Clan.

The eyes of the members of Qin Clan, all landed on the body of Qin Wentian. Today, Qin Wentian had displayed his talent, which without a doubt, brought great joy and surprise to them. However, there were many among them who felt slightly awkward.

Only to see the Qin Clan's second in command, Qin He, open his mouth and apologised. "Wentian, I once wanted to kick you out of the Qin Clan. Lucky for us, I didn't succeed. If not, I certainly would be labeled as a criminal of our Qin Clan. Will you forgive me?"

As he concluded to represent his sincerity, Qin He actually bent his waist slightly in a bow towards Qin Wentian.

"And me, Qin Ye. Wentian, if you're unhappy about me, you can let big brother punish me in whatever ways you deem fit. If a single cry of protest escapes from my lips, I'm not fit to be a man of the Qin Clan." The brash voice of Qin Ye sounded out, emitting masculinity, the attitude of a real man.

"2nd uncle, 3rd uncle, your actions were only as such, because you took the Qin Clan into consideration — how could I ever blame you all? After all, it was true that I had wasted plenty of cultivation resources of the Qin Clan." Qin Wentian smiled, shaking his head, as if he didn't mind their earlier treatment of him from before.

"You still dare to say that? The Yuan Meteor Stones father gave

you, didn't you sneakily pass them all to me?" Qin Yao, unable to bear it any longer, interjected, causing astonishment and gasps of shock among the members of the Qin Clan. Didn't this mean that Qin Wentian had cultivated to his current level, without the aid of the Yuan Meteor Stones provided?

"Father, 2nd uncle, 3rd uncle, you all don't know that Wentian has a deeply insightful and unique understanding regarding Astral Constellations. It was he that helped me condense my Astral Soul, and he was also the one that had passed me all the Yuan Meteor Stones that father gave him." Qin Yao blurted out the truth, once again causing the gazes of the members of the Qin Clan to land onto Qin Wentian, as he smiled awkwardly.

"I couldn't use them, so I gave them all to elder sis." Qin Wentian rubbed the back of his head as he replied.

Qin He and Qin Ye, stared blankly at Qin Wentian, as they silently sighed in their hearts. The youth in front of their eyes, had such a degree of forbearance. What an unusual disposition. The ridiculous one was them, acting as children, wanting to drive him away, causing them to be extremely embarrassed.

The two of them silently vowed in their hearts, that, from now on, they would do everything in their power to protect this youth standing in front of them.

AGM 017 – Tiny Astral-Being

When Qin Chuan saw the unity that the members of the Qin Clan possessed even in times of danger, it caused him to be filled with joy. The men of the Qin Clan were all strong and determined, unyielding even in face of death.

“2nd brother, 3rd brother, follow me to see father. Wentian, Yao`er, the two of you can go back first.” After which, Qin Chuan led Qin He and the rest away.

“The previous emperor graced our ancestor with kindness. Our ancestor and our grandfather, Qin Wu, always cherished that display of kindness, not even hesitating to sell their lives for the country. But now, the Royal Clan actually wants our Qin Clan to disappear. I’m afraid grandfather will no longer be able to tolerate this.” Qin Yao murmured in a low voice, as Qin Wentian tried to console her, “Don’t worry, I’m sure grandfather has a plan.”

“And you, this fellow, actually hid the fact that you had condensed your Astral Soul from me. During the exam, you caused the drum to sound out the 8th reverberation, signifying that one possesses 80 bulls of strength. What’s your current cultivation level now?” As they walked on, Qin Yao blinked her beautiful eyes as she asked curiously. If one didn’t take into account the boosting effect of martial techniques and astral souls, they must at least be at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm to possess the strength level of 81 bulls.

“You guess?” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders. After all, having such strength at only the 6th level of the Body Refinement

Realm seemed somewhat implausible.

“How do I guess?” Qin Yao’s lips lightly twitched as she glanced smilingly at Qin Wentian. “How does annulling the marriage engagement with the top beauty of our Sky Harmony City feel like? Are you depressed?”

“What’s there to be depressed about? Don’t I already have a beauty at my side?” Qin Wentian intentionally allowed his gaze to roam over the svelte figure of the 1.7m tall Qin Yao. Even when compared to Autumn Snow, Qin Yao was definitely a top class beauty, especially now, as she emitted a slightly mature air since she had returned from her training in the Royal Academy.

“Hmph. You even dare to take liberties with me.” Qin Yao face reddened after she saw the unbridled look that Qin Wentian shot her way, as she extended her hands towards his waist region and pinched mercilessly, until Qin Wentian involuntarily drew in a breath of cold air.

“Sister, I was wrong.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled as he apologised, before Qin Yao would release him. After which, Qin Yao caused Qin Wentian’s expression to freeze, as she retrieved two Yuan Meteor stones from her robes.

“These are.....”

“These are the first two meteor stones that you gave to me. I’ve always kept them with me, just in case you needed to use them in the future. “ Qin Yao grabbed Qin Wentian’s hand, as she passed

the stones over to him.

Looking at the beautiful countenance in front of him, Qin Wentian's heart slightly warmed. Yuan Meteor stones were of paramount importance to Stellar Martial Cultivators, enabling them to raise their cultivation at an unimaginably fast speed. Qin Yao had actually kept two of them throughout all this years, just to pass them back to him when he needed it.

“Sis?” Qin Wentian looked at Qn Yao, causing Qin Yao to stare back at him as she smiled, “What? You want to offer yourself in marriage?”

“Hmm.” Qin Wentian's eyes flashed, as he stared at Qin Yao with an unwavering look in his eyes, causing her face to redden again as she hurriedly turned her body and replied, “You must work hard to cultivate, and prove yourself to everyone.”

After which, Qin Yao half-walked and half-ran away from the courtyard they were in.

“Ye Clan, Bai Clan, Royal Clan.” Qin Wentian muttered in a low voice, as he sat down cross-leggedly. The past few days, things had happened at too fast a pace — there wasn't even time for him to properly inspect his current cultivation level.

As he calmed his heart, Qin Wentian fully immersed himself in that state. He could sense the existence of his Astral Gate, and within it, was the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, emitting a tyrannical strength.

“The Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul was condensed through forming an innate link with the constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer. But the me now, is still incapable of fully harnessing the power it contains. Only after I’ve stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, will the true might contained within the Astral Soul fully support me in battle.”

Qin Wentian silently speculated that the higher quality an Astral Soul was, the more terrifying the strength contained within would be. That was why, despite Qin Wentian’s current cultivation at the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm, he was able to unleash such terrifying strength; it was all thanks to the boosting effects caused by his Astral Soul.

“Not only that, the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul should also be able to grant me an increase in talent in forging and smithing abilities, but I haven’t unearthed that yet.”

As he pondered, his heart couldn’t help but feel slight traces of awe, as his thoughts drifted to that tiny Astral Being from before. The mysterious and effective Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, was bequeathed to him from the memories contained within that Astral Being.

And what’s more, that tiny Astral Being was materialised from the stone that his dead old fogey of a father left him. It might be an Yuan Meteor Stone that hailed from one of the highest heavenly layers.

That stone probably underwent the transformation after absorbing the Astral Light emitted when Qin Wentian was condensing his Astral Soul. As he thought of that, Qin Wentian's consciousness drifted towards the Astral Being. However, at this moment, that tiny Astral Being emitted no light, but instead, it looked as dull as the corona of light that was extremely dimmed — as if it was somehow sealed. There was no way for his consciousness to establish a link with it.

With a slight intention of will, the astral energy within Stellar Meridians transformed into a swirl, and as the tyrannical energy contained within his body madly surged and flowed towards the tiny Astral being, it was akin to a creek flowing into the ocean — once a flood was started, it was nearly unstoppable. And abruptly, columns of Astral Light cascaded into, and were absorbed inside, the body of the tiny Astral Being, disappearing without a trace — as if the columns of Astral Light had never existed.

“As expected!” Qin Wentian's trembled slightly, as he unceasingly controlled the Astral Energy to flow towards the Astral Being. However, it was akin to a bottomless pit, relentlessly devouring the Astral energy provided, yet with no hint of any other reactions.

Finally, Qin Wentian stopped the flow of energy. As he opened his eyes, hints of astonishment could be seen. It seemed that if he wanted to trigger the tiny Astral Being, he would need an immense source of Astral Energy. Apparently, the energy that was stored in his body was insufficient.

Traces of thoughtfulness filled his eyes. This tiny Astral Being

had bestowed upon him the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique, not to mention the fact that this was an inheritance the old fogey of a dad had left for him. He had a very strong intuition that there might be a great secret hidden within.

Hardening his heart, Qin Wentian withdrew a Yuan Meteor Stone and placed it on his palms, closing his eyes. At the same time, as the Astral Energy in his body started to flow in a frenzied manner towards the Astral Being, he was drawing upon the energy contained within the Yuan Meteor Stone, absorbing it into his body.

This time around, the process lasted longer. The Astral Being was akin to a bottomless pit, madly devouring the Astral Energy, like it was impossible to satisfy it. Qin Wentian felt depression in his heart. If he'd used the energy absorbed to practice the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, he'd be much closer to breaking through to the next level.

But now, the Astral Energy contained within was absorbed into his body, not used to aid him in his cultivation. It was hungrily devoured by that Astral Being instead.

However, the Qin Wentian now, was akin to riding atop the back of a tiger, unable to dismount halfway — he must reach a result. As time passed, the Astral Energy within his body continuously was depleted, which in turn caused him to draw upon the energy of the Yuan Meteor Stone more and more, until the point where even the Astral Energy was about to be fully exhausted, before that tiny Astral Being finally slightly gleamed with light.

“There’s a reaction” Qin Wentian’s heart shuddered as he manifested his will, causing his intention to drift over to probe the Astral Being. He had a feeling that the Astral Being was nothing but a body made up of a vast consciousness. When his own consciousness came in contact with it, it was as if he had fallen into the boundless awareness and thoughts of that Astral Being. Qin Wentian could feel that he himself, was just an insignificant being, and was very small and tiny — as if he was standing in front of one of the Astral Rivers.

Qin Wentian’s consciousness wanted to form an innate link with Astral Being, but it seemed impossible to do so. That vast consciousness of the Astral Being seemed to be somehow sealed still.

“I need even more Astral Energy.” Qin Wentian gritted his teeth as he continued channeling energy into the tiny Astral Being. All the way up until the Astral Energy contained within the first Yuan Meteor Stone was fully used up, before he took out the second stone, and continued. At this point, there was no way he’d give this up. He had to get to the bottom of the matter.

Finally, Qin Wentian could feel the seal on the Astral Being was gradually breaking apart, and after some time, an intense ray of blinding Astral Light suddenly erupted forth, and all Qin Wentian could feel, was that his own consciousness was being enveloped and shrouded by that vast consciousness of the Astral Being.

All of a sudden, he could feel that a ray of light had entered into his consciousness, causing his consciousness to undergo intense vibration, as if it was struggling not to get disintegrated. His heart

trembled violently, as a twinge of acute pain stabbed into his head, and his body collapsed on the ground.

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath. During that last instance, the circumstances were similar to now, when he was bestowed the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique. A moment felt as long as an eternity, as rivulets of sweat flowed down his entire body.

“Memory, it’s another fragmented memory.” Qin Wentian’s heart shivered with excitement, as the tiny Astral Being, begin to dim and returned to it’s original state, forcing out his consciousness. But now, a new memory was imprinted in his mind.

The Astral Being was akin to an endless memory device storage treasure box. Every time it activated, it would grant him an extraordinary piece of fragmented memory, which usually happened to be what he needed. Previously, it was the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique, and this time around, it was exactly what he needed. It was some memory fragments about the forging of weapons!

“That damned fogey, what on earth did you leave for me.” Qin Wentian stared blankly at the space, as if he suddenly saw a silhouette, an extremely gentle looking face. The face of his dead father that was looking down at him from the heavens.

Lost in contemplation for a while, Qin Wentian opened his palms, glancing at the 2nd Yuan Meteor Stone as he mumbled in a low voice, “Activating the Astral Being requires a colossal amount of Astral Energy, and moreover, this amount of energy is only

sufficient to activate a few memory fragments. If I wanted to activate it again, there's a need to depend on the valuable Yuan Meteor Stones."

After his mumblings, Qin Wentian continued, and started to absorb the Astral Energy within the Yuan Meteor Stone. However, the energy absorbed this time, wasn't used to activate the Astral Being, but to replenish the astral energy in his body which had been exhausted earlier. At the same time, Qin Wentian also began to process the newly obtained fragments of memory.

Weapons could be categorised broadly into two types – ordinary weapons, and divine weapons. Ordinary weapons wouldn't have any additional effects, while divine weapons could boost the user's might by a huge level. And as such, when cultivators referred to weapons, they would usually mean divine-leveled weapons.

There were 10 levels for divine weapons, with each level being further divided into three tiers. For cultivators that had the abilities to forge weapons, they were all greatly revered, and were known as either weaponsmiths, or master forgers. For those that had a forging related Astral Soul, it was even easier for them to become a weaponsmith, and as for Qin Wentian, his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, was precisely a type of forging-class Astral Soul. Uncle Black had once listed out the various constellations in the 5th Heavenly Layer for him, thus, it could be seen how knowledgeable Uncle Black was.

"According to this memory fragment, for a weaponsmith to forge a weapon, other than mastering the relevant forging techniques, the other most important thing was the inscription of divine runes

and imprints. For those who possess a forging-type Astral Soul, in terms of forging weapons, hold an absolute advantage because they can create divine imprints within their bodies, and can directly, via their Astral Soul, inscribe the divine imprint onto the weapons created.”

Qin Wentian slowly digested the contents within the memory fragment, as the memory fragment also contained information about formations.

Divine imprints were actually considered a special type of formation, and were specifically used during the forging of a weapon — they were extremely complicated.

In his memory, there existed a plethora of basic-level imprints, and even some combined ones. But to fully understand them, would require a long period of time.

“All weaponsmiths and master forgers are greatly respected, and hold an extraordinary status in this world. I possess a forging-type Astral Soul, and can already be considered a basic-level weaponsmith — able to create weapons in exchange for Yuan Meteor Stones. And if I could breakthrough and become a 1st-level weaponsmith, I’d gain the right to join the Star River Association, and upgrade my status. By that time, even in the Royal Capital, the Royal Clan and the Ye Clan would no longer dare to be so arrogant.”

Qin Wentian was thinking in his heart. He had a forging-type Astral Soul that was condensed from the 5th Heavenly Layer. How could he not put it to good use? Since he was already embroiled in

this current chaotic situation, he had to do something for himself, and plan for the future of the Qin Clan. Increasing his strength through cultivation, as well as becoming a forging master.

Five days later, since he now, had no power to change anything, Qin Wentian attempted to gain enlightenment and insights on the divine imprints during the day, while continuing to improve his cultivation level with the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique at night, showing no concern for the circumstances outside. Since Qin Wu expressly forbade him from doing so, he decided to just focus all his attention on upgrading his strength.

At this moment, there were several metallic materials strewn about the training courtyard Qin Wentian was in, and on the surface of these metallic plates, there were traces of complex imprints carved upon them. The almost-completed imprints emitted a strong vital aura, fluctuating above the surface of the metal plates, interweaving together into the picture of divine imprints.

“Now my accuracy has gotten much higher.” Qin Wentian stood there, while within the Stellar Meridians inside his body, tiny symbols of divine imprints glittered. Those mysterious divine imprints grouped together, and condensed into the form of an incomparably sharp sword, possessing a tremendous penetrating force, while in Qin Wentian’s hand, a gigantic hammer, in the shape of the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, materialized.

Qin Wentian’s steps lightly trembled, as instantly, the force of the incomparably sharp sword created from the symbols of divine

imprints inside his body flowed along with the activation of his Stellar Meridians, towards his arms, and imbued the Heavenly Hammer. While at the same time, Qin Wentian raised his arms and ferociously slammed the hammer towards the direction of the metal plates.

“Clatter!”

A ringing sound rang out, as the Heavenly Hammer landed onto the metal plate, and instantly, on the surface of that metal plate, the symbol of a divine imprint in the shape of a sword that glowed with astral light, while emitting an extremely sharp and penetrative aura, appeared before infusing into it. After which, the traces of the previous divine imprints disappeared, causing the visage of Qin Wentian to breakout into a joyful smile.

“The most critical thing in forging a weapon – the divine imprint, is not a problem for me. Seems like I’m truly a natural born weaponsmith. Forging weapons will be as easy as turning over my palm for me.”

Qin Wentian chortled in a low voice. Although he was extremely satisfied with his divine imprint inscriptions, Qin Wentian was still unsure about how terrifying the advantage he held was, when compared to other weaponsmiths.

AGM 018 – Star River Association

Within the Qin Residence's discussion hall, the members of the Qin Clan were all gathered with unsightly expressions on their faces.

“What's the situation now? Qin Chuan asked while he swept his gaze around the surroundings.

“Clan Leader, the end of the year is approaching. Many of those who went out of the city for cultivation purposes have returned, but the situation was still the same — they were only allowed to enter, not exit. Although our Qin Clan's troops somewhat counterbalanced the threat posed by the Silver Feather Legion and the Chu Dragon Guards, the people of our Qin Clan are still often subjected to bullying and humiliation, and rumours are spread. They are saying that this time round, our Qin Clan won't be able to overcome this danger.

“How about any news from the Royal Capital, and what about the Emperor Star Academy, is there any news?” Qin Chuan asked again. The Qin Clan naturally had their own network of spies within the Royal Capital.

“As for news from the Royal Capital.....”, the speaker's expression flickered, “The Royal Capital seems to have no knowledge of what's happening to the Sky Harmony City, as well, the news has been sealed. And as for Ye WuQue, a few days ago, he stepped into the 9th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, with a few hints that he'd soon breakthrough to the Yuanfu Realm. This caused people with high status and authority to value him. The

Emperor Star Academy was strongly restricted by the Royal Clan pressuring them, and there seems to be no positive news towards the matters of the Young Master.”

“KaCha!” A crisp sound rang out as Qin Chuan clenched his fist, as a sharp look flashed in his eyes.

“That showy display by Wentian seemed not to have garnered enough attention. Ye WuQue’s talent, coupled with the strong pressure from the Royal Clan, caused the light of Qin Wentian’s talent to be snuffed out.” Qin Chuan mumbled in a low tone, “Wentian, please grow up faster, and show them your talent.”

“Pass this news down, the members of Qin Clan are to cut down on the number exiting the city, and in addition, withdraw all the remaining Yuan Meteor Stones in our storage, and send them over to Wentian.” Qin Chuan’s expression flickered, causing the hearts of the crowd to tremble. Regardless of anything, it seems like Qin Chuan wanted to nurture Qin Wentian. If an event happened that brought any misfortune on the Qin Clan, they would still have a trace of hope.

Qin Wentian soon received the Yuan Meteor Stones which Qin Chuan sent. This time round, there were a total of three pieces, causing a slight disquieting feeling in his heart. He knew that the Qin Clan, in recent years, has been truly been in decline. Their income could no longer cover their expenditures, and their resources were unceasingly consumed, and their finances could be said to be in dire straits.

However, this served as the motivation to further strengthen Qin

Wentian's conviction.

Today, Qin Wentian left the Qin Residence through a side gate. The Silver Feather Legion had stationed their troops outside the main door of the Qin Residence, facing the Qin Clan's troops in confrontation, but the Silver Feather Legion did not go overboard and go for the kill. On the surface, it looked calm and peaceful, but Qin Wentian knew that there are bound to be a surging undercurrent hidden within this grand scale of a game.

However, he ignored all of this, and arrived alone at the central district of the Sky Harmony District where the Star River Association was located.

There were countless branches of the Star River Association throughout the country of Chu, with its headquarters located within the Chu Capital. The association located in the Sky Harmony City was just a branch. The Star River Association had never interfered with affairs of the outside world, yet it was a fact that they possessed unquestionable authority, and their true strength was unfathomable. To Qin Wentian, he felt that the branch located within the Royal Capital, might not even be the true headquarters of the mysterious Star River Association.

And it was precisely because of the unique position of the Star River Association that Qin Wentian came here today. Firstly, he wanted to learn more about the arts of forging weapons, and secondly, to protect himself and his clan – he wanted to join the Star River Association to gain a certain status. If he was a member of the Star River Association, when he arrived in the Royal Capital in the future, even the assassin groups had to be wary of the power

behind him.

“The River Star Association can be segregated into four divisions – Weaponsmith Division, Pill Concoction Division, Martial Fate Division, as well as Heavenly River Division. Foster Father had said that the status and power of the River Star Association, may be even greater than that of the Royal Clan.” Qin Wentian silently intoned in his heart, as he stared at the majestic building in front of him.

“Qin Wentian.” At this moment, a voice rang out, Qin Wentian turned his body, and saw a graceful silhouette appearing before him, it was none other than one of the four beauties of the Sky Harmony City – Lin Yue. A few days ago, she had been invited to join the Divine Wind Academy.

Lin Yue had wanted to travel to the Royal Capital after the year ended, and thus, had wanted to make some preparations beforehand, coming to the Star River Association to request Grandmaster Francis to create a divine weapon for her. Grandmaster Francis was someone that could forge a 1st-level top-tier divine weapon.

“The Qin Clan is already going to be eradicated, to think that you still have the time to seek out a master to forge a divine weapon to make preparations for entering the Royal Capital?” Lin Yue sneered slightly, as she looked towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian slightly furrowed his brows, before coldly stating, “Even if the whole of your Lin Clan was annihilated, my Qin Clan would still be surviving well.”

The first words out of Lin Yue mouth's was already something condemning the Qin Clan, causing Qin Wentian to be extremely irritated.

“Impudent.” Lin Yue's countenance underwent a slight change, from young, she had always been lavished upon with all possible love and doting, and had never once met a person who dared to contradict her. However, Lin Yue's mouth slightly curled up into a sneer before she added, “Oh I almost forgot, the Qin Wentian today is already a genius, different from the Qin Wentian previously. No wonder you have such a filthy mouth.”

“Filthy mouth?” Qin Wentian was speechless, the woman before him seemed to be suffering from the princess syndrome. Qin Wentian stared with disgust at Lin Yue, before turning his back away from her.

“You.....” Lin Yue could sense the disgust and contempt in his gaze, which in turn, caused her expressions to sink.

Lin Yue, was not only one of the four great beauties, she could also be counted as a genius, and was extremely dazzling in the Sky Harmony City. Everytime she went out, she would have loads of people admiring her. But ever since Autumn Snow condensed her Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, there were many who felt that she was inferior to Autumn Snow, and when the representatives hailing from the Royal Capital came for the purpose of recruiting Autumn Snow, Lin Yue couldn't help but feel a bad taste in her mouth.

That day of the examination, she had hoped to be invited to either the Royal Academy or the Emperor Star Academy based on her talent, but, it was not to be. However, both Autumn Snow and Qin Wentian had managed to easily secure the invitations! And by then, all the attention of the crowd was only focused on the both of them, neglecting her. She hated this type of feeling immensely, hated that earlier look of contempt from Qin Wentian, it could be said that, in her heart, she was jealous of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian, along with many other people, was in the Grand Hall of the Star River Association. The design was such that the moment you entered, you would be able to see the reception counter.

Qin Wentian proceeded onwards, only to encounter a beautiful receptionist, wearing the Star River Association uniform, accentuating her curves, slightly bending her body in a bow of greetings.

“Sir, do you need to forge a weapon? Or require assistance in pill concoction?” The woman smiled as she looked at Qin Wentian. Majority of those who come to the Star River Association was either for weapon forging or pill concoction.

“I wish to become a weaponsmith apprentice.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Oh if this is the case, your luck today is excellent. Grandmaster Francis is here today, I could put in a recommendation for you, but there would be no guarantees that Grandmaster Francis will be accepting apprentices. Please wait over there.” The female

receptionist did not find it strange, after all, there was always plenty of people wanting to master the crafts of either weapon forging or pill concoction.

“Becoming an apprentice? Wishful thinking.” Lin Yue, who entered the building alongside with Qin Wentian sneered sarcastically. How difficult was it to become a weaponsmith? And not to mention the fact that most weaponsmiths would usually not pass down the divine imprints they possessed to their apprentices.

“Miss Lin Yue, you’re here, Grandmaster Francis already knew of your visit and would be attending to you personally after a short while.” The countenance of the beautiful receptionist were adorned with smiles as she greeted Lin Yue, causing the gazes of many in the crowds to turn towards Lin Yue as well. This young genius who was about to enroll in the Divine Wind Academy, was a ravishing beauty indeed.

“Please convey my thanks to Grandmaster Francis.” after causing so many heads to turn in her direction, Lin Yue glowed with pride, as a smile broke out on her visage.

“Master Francis and Old Master Lin are bosom buddies, naturally he would take special care of you.”

“That’s right, Lin Yue, your dad and me are old acquaintances, don’t call me Grandmaster Francis, just calling me Uncle would do.” A bright and clear sounding voice drifted over, Francis too, was wearing the robe of the Star River Association, and had a radiant smile on his face as he walked over.

“Uncle Francis, this time round, I would have to trouble you.” The corners of Lin Yue’s mouth had a slightly complacent smile, as she intentionally swept her gaze at Qin Wentian.

“No trouble at all, since Lin Yue you had managed to become a member of the Divine Wind Academy, no matter what weapon you need, including any special requests, just let me know, I will forge a divine weapon that is suited to you.”

“Uncle Francis, my Astral Soul is a rabbit, agile and nimble, what I want is a sword, a sword with the length of 3 feet, primarily it should be best suited for speedy swordplay techniques.”

“Fine, I will inscribe the divine imprint of the feathered wings on to it, lightening the weight of the sword, while having the inherent effect of boosting your speed and agility.” Master Francis laughed.

Lin Yue smiled with satisfaction apparent on her face after she heard that, and after which, the pretty receptionist from earlier approached them once again, looking at Grandmaster Francis as she stated, “Grandmaster Francis, those people there wished to make a request for you to forge them divine weapons, and among them, there is one who wished to become an apprentice.”

“For those who made a request, take down the details of what they want and the compensation they would offer. After that, pass the list to me and I will select a few out that list and get those who are selected to come back here three days later. And as for the one who wanted to become an apprentice, who is he?” Francis opened

his mouth and said, causing the hearts of the crowd to silently sigh, this was indeed the rights of a weaponsmith. Having the ability to choose which divine weapon he wanted to forge and the person who made the request, had to first list out what he wishes to compensate first. In the Chu Country, the position of weaponsmiths were extremely revered.

“It’s him.” Lin Yue pointed to Qin Wentian, “That person with a filthy mouth.”

Qin Wentian creased his eyebrows slightly, he had a filthy mouth? Lin Yue was obviously the one with the filthy mouth right? Everyone knows that this woman is suffering from the princess-syndrome.

“Did he somehow offend you?”

“Yes.” Lin Yue inclined her head.

“Leave him for me to handle.” Francis laughed, “Lin Yue, come back 3 days later to collect your divine weapon.”

“As for the one who wanted to become a apprentice, follow me.”

Qin Wentian hesitated for a moment, before standing up, and following after Francis.

Francis waved goodbye to Lin Yue, as he accepted the record paper the receptionist passed him, before bringing Qin Wentian to

a huge door, situated in the left section of the grand hall. Inside that door, was an entirely different world. This was, the weaponsmith division of the Star River Association.

As a first-level weaponsmith of the Star River Association, Francis had his own weapon forging hall, and as Qin Wentian followed Francis to the entrance of the hall, a wave of fiery heat billowed out, causing rivulets of sweat to instantly formed on Qin Wentian's forehead.

“Come with me.” Beckoning to Qin Wentian, Francis stepped into the hall. Qin Wentian saw that there were quite a few rooms located within the hall. Francis walked directly to a room with a huge smelting furnace, that sank into the ground. Below that smelting furnace, there were numerous terrifying flame embers that was continuously heating it up.

“You can look around first.” Francis indifferently said, as Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head. He could feel that the sense of pride that emanated out from Grandmaster Francis. Only those at the first-level of weaponsmith masters, would be bestowed the title of a master forger, and thus held in high regards by others.

“These are the materials for forging weapons.” Qin Wentian walked towards the entrance of a side chamber.

After which, Qin Wentian walked to the entrance of another side chamber and contained within it, was the weapon mold for sabres, spears, swords, halberds, shields, glove, etc.

“What? It’s empty!” Qin Wentian’s countenance slightly froze. He realised that all the weapon molds contained nothing within.

“Those are a special embryo for weapons that were molded into the shape of divine weapons, as long as the materials for the divine weapons were melted into a liquid form by the smelting furnace, transferring the liquid into the mold casted by the special embryo, and allowing it to harden, the embryonic form of the divine weapon would be created. Now, bring all these special embryos to the space beside the smelting furnace, I want to get started on creating the divine weapons.”

The voice of Francis drifted over, as Qin Wentian silently nodded his head, bringing all the special embryo to the space beside the smelting furnace. While Francis was consulting the record paper, seemingly deciding who to forge a divine weapon for.

“A sword, a shield, a long spear and two sabres, pour the metallic liquid into the molds of weapons which I had just mentioned.”

“Has all the liquid completely filled up the mold?”

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows in confusion, although he had never forged a weapon before, he understood the logic behind the forging of weapons. Different weapons would require different ratio of materials. For example, a sword would need to be sharp, while a shield would need to be thick and heavy. How could it be so simple like what Grandmaster Francis described?

“Did you know? The metallic liquid in the smelting furnace was

mixed according to the golden ratio, so it is sufficient to forge divine weapons of any shape. Once the shape of the divine weapon had materialised, one would only need to inscribe different divine imprints to achieve the different effects that are required. The most important thing when forging a divine weapon, is the inscription of the divine imprints. Do you understand now?” Master Francis involuntarily coldly explained as if he was pissed off by the questioning look in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian calmly replied, yet coldly smiling within his heart. This Francis, he was just too lazy to spend the efforts to truly forge a weapon. All the divine weapons were forged by the same materials ratio, before inscribing a divine imprint on it and repackaging it as a “divine weapon” and could be exchanged for the compensation. No wonder all weaponsmiths were extremely wealthy!

AGM 019 – Natural Born Weaponsmith

Weaponsmiths, other than needing to cultivate, would still need to devote their time to gain insights regarding the divine imprints needed for the creation of divine weapons. The majority of weaponsmiths were like Francis, and would accept forging requests in exchange for wealth. Naturally, they wouldn't devote their entire efforts into the creation of every single piece of divine weapon manufactured. What most would do, would be to follow in the steps of Francis — to use metallic liquid that was mixed according to a golden ratio, set them into the cast of the embryo, and then inscribe divine imprints onto them.

Qin Wentian, based on the request of Francis, poured the metallic liquid into the embryo casts, before setting them aside and allowing the liquid to cool and condense into the embryonic forms of the weapons. At this moment, Francis passed a small refining furnace to Qin Wentian as he instructed, “Go to the Materials Hall and get 0.5kg of bronze, 0.25kg of silver sand, 0.5kg of bloodstones, as well as a few kilograms of starsteel and aluminium.”

“These materials are for forging the sword — and not just any sword, but an extremely light and nimble sword.” After Qin Wentian obtained the forging memory fragment, there was, of course, information regarding the various types of materials. As a result, he somewhat understood the purpose of each material. Bronze as the main material, silver sand to give the weapon a shine, and the other materials were used to refine the sharpness, as well as lighten the weight of the sword while, strengthening the main body of it; especially the bloodstones and the starsteel — they were all considered expensive and valuable metals.

“Grandmaster Francis, is this the sword you’re intending to create for Lin Yue?” Qin Wentian probed.

Francis cast a sidelong glance at Qin Wentian, before stating coldly, “Not bad, you have some small smattering of knowledge, knowing that these materials are for the forging of a nimble sword. Her father and me have a deep friendship between us, and she herself is a cultivation genius, so the weapon will be forged for her, therefore I will naturally devote more effort into it. You must’ve offended her on purpose to gain her attention, right? But let me urge you to stop dreaming and to give up that idea. If you are willing to be my apprentice for three years, I will graciously impart to you some of the simple basic-level divine imprints for you to gain insights into.”

“Three years of apprenticeship, yet only imparting knowledge of basic-level divine imprints?” Qin Wentian murmured. He knew that weaponsmiths placed an immense amount of emphasis on divine imprints.

“What? You find the period of three years too long for your taste? Do you know how high a price I paid to obtain these divine imprints from the Star River Association?” Francis coldly snorted, “Go, collect the materials which I have stated.”

Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head in agreement, as he went to the materials hall to collect the necessary materials, passing the furnace back to Francis when he returned. After which, Francis poured the materials into the huge smelting furnace, melting them down into the metallic liquid.

“The earthfire used for the refining and creation of weapons was naturally provided by the Star River Association. If it wasn’t for the assistance of them, many weaponsmiths would be incapable of melting the forging materials — it was indeed tough to become a weaponsmith.” Qin Wentian lightly sighed in his heart; the toughness of forging materials, such as starsteel, was so high, that ordinary fire wouldn’t be able to melt them.

Especially, if one wanted a top grade divine weapon; the higher the grade of a divine weapon, the tougher the materials would be to melt.

And not to mention, to a weaponsmith, the toughest as well as the most crucial step to forging a divine weapon was the knowledge and ability to inscribe the necessary divine imprints.

After the metallic liquid was poured into the individual embryonic casts, Francis waited until cracks had appeared on the surface of the embryonic casts, before he instructed Qin Wentian to place the sword-form embryonic cast onto the surface of the stoneforge. Raising a finger, Francis lightly tapped on the embryonic cast as it broke apart, revealing a fiery red embryonic sword that was glowing from the heat of the earthfire.

“At this moment, before the sword has fully completed its cooling process, is the best moment to inscribe divine imprints onto it.” Francis indifferently explained, as he concentrated. Suddenly, there was a slight fluctuation in astral pressure, as he raised his index finger. His index finger began glowing resplendently, while emitting Astral Qi, before transforming into the shape of an astral carving knife.

“This is an Astral Soul. The form of Francis’ Astral Soul was actually a carving knife, and can’t be considered a forging-type Astral Soul. However, when used to inscribe divine imprints, it’s still adequate and sufficient, well up to the task.” Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. Francis then directed the astral carving knife to inscribe divine imprints onto the surface of the sword, making no moves to mask his actions from Qin Wentian. After all, even the simplest divine imprints were complex beyond belief, the drawing of each runic line during carving, especially when the runic lines intersected, were as complex as the mystical energy channels in the human body. It was difficult to discover just from the naked eyes.

However, what Francis didn’t expected, was that each of his movements were fully seen, and the intent behind his actions were clearly understood by Qin Wentian, who was standing at the side.

“This is a basic-level, sword-form divine imprint. It can increase sharpness of the sword, as well as boosting the attack power of the user. However, the divine imprint carved by Francis looks extremely crude, almost to the point of a children’s drawing.” Qin Wentian’s heart was as pure as a mirror, emptied of distractions, and naturally he wouldn’t reveal anything. This Francis didn’t possess a forging-type Astral Soul, and had to carve the divine imprint by hand. His talent was also ordinary for a weaponsmith, so for the crude carving of the divine imprint, it couldn’t entirely be blamed on him.

Actually, Francis himself knew that his carving knife Astral Soul didn’t possess any advantage on the path of cultivation. Hence, he decided to fully devote his efforts on pursuing the path of a

weaponsmith. In the dao of weaponsmithing, he could still be considered to have some small accomplishments, yet never would he have thought that he'd be despised by a mere fledgling — by Qin Wentian.

“If you can manage to learn these divine imprints from me, I can guarantee that, in this lifetime, you won't have any worries about living in comfort.” Francis had no idea what Qin Wentian was thinking as he spoke with pride, his tone filled with hints of a light contemptuous laughter. He cast a sidelong glance at Qin Wentian, while concurrently inscribing the divine imprints on to all the embryonic divine weapons, and waited for them to cool down before further tempering the body of the weapon, sharpening the edges, matching them with the necessary accessories such as scabbard, etc.

As for the divine imprints that were inscribed during the post-embryonic cast phase, there were no outwards indications of them. It was like the divine imprints had all disappeared, as if they had fully amalgamated with the weapon, becoming the “energy channels” of the divine weapon.

“Try it yourself.” Francis passed a recently forged divine weapon over to Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian held the sword, as his astral energy surged, entering into the weapon. At that same instance, Qin Wentian could feel a sort of innate connection — akin to the one shared between flesh and blood — connecting him with the weapon. This feeling was incredibly hard to describe; he felt as if his own blood vessels, meridians and energy channels had been linked together with the

sword, as the Astral Energy within him began to flow into the divine weapon.

“How mysterious.” Qin Wentian had just embarked onto the path of cultivation a few days ago, and thus, he’d never had contact with divine weapons before. He didn’t expect that divine imprints would actually have such a miraculous effect.

“Today, you’ve already witnessed the process of forging. If you still want to be a long-term apprentice, in the future, I’ll devote my focus on carving the divine imprints, while the rest of the forging processes will be carried out by you. How about it?” Francis asked, as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Grandmaster Francis, I won’t come here often, but if I have the time, I would help you with what you mentioned earlier. I have no need for any compensation.” Qin Wentian replied. Actually, contained within the memory fragment, there were already methods of forging of divine weapons, it was just that he had to personally experience it himself so that he could comprehend more.

When it came to the forging of a divine weapon, the inscriptions of the divine imprint were still the most crucial step. As for the other segments of the forging process, he only needed to grasp which materials combination needed to be used for the forging of different types of weapons; including grasping the techniques of sharpening the blades, etc. As for the type of flames used for refinement, as long as one was in the Star River Association, there was no need to worry about that all.

And because the materials in the Star River Association were all ready-made, Francis could easily manufacture a batch of low-graded 1st level divine weapons. But, even if it was a low-graded 1st level divine weapon, to the majority of the people in the Body Refinement Realm, they were still considered priceless treasures.

“You don’t know what’s good for you.” Francis coldly snorted, “I’ll go and take a rest, help me dispose of all the remaining waste material.”

Looking at the back of Francis as he departed, Qin Wentian knew that this person was pretty crafty indeed. Obviously, he only needed a day to create a bunch of low grade divine weapons, but he told his customers to come back in three days. This would signify that to craft the divine weapon, he would need a great deal of time.

But naturally, if Francis truly devoted all his time and energy into the forging of a divine weapon, he would truly need three days — because the inscriptions of the divine imprint were truly a difficult task. There couldn’t be any mistakes when carving the runic lines — it would only take a single mistake to cause the whole inscribing process to fail.

After Francis left, Qin Wentian pulled another embryonic sword-shaped cast over, and he poured the metallic liquid that was mixed with the golden ratio in, as he prepared to try it for himself.

“According to the memory fragment I received, divine inscriptions and divine weapons, can both be divided into 10 levels – 1st level divine weapons will need to be complemented with a 1st level divine inscription, and 2nd level divine weapons at the very

least, will need a 2nd level divine inscription to complement it. As for divine inscriptions of the 2nd level and higher, they're all a result of evolution from the combination of basic-level divine imprints. The higher level a divine imprint is, the harder it is for one to gain insights into it. As for the 3rd level divine imprints stored in my memories, I can't even see the basic outlines of them yet." Qin Wentian silently intoned in his heart.

After cracks appeared on the surface of the embryonic cast, he placed the cast onto the surface of the stoneforge, and as he applied pressure with his palm, the cracks widened as the cast broke apart, revealing a fiery red sword. The Astral Energy in Qin Wentian's body started to interweave frenziedly, congregating into a focal point, and transforming into the shape of a picture of a sword-shaped divine imprint. The name of this 1st level divine imprint, was known as 'Flying Sword'.

In his palm, the shape of a Heavenly Hammer materialized, as the divine imprint made of Astral Energy in his body began being transferred onto the bottom side of the Heavenly Hammer, before eventually being branded there.

Qin Wentian raised his arm, as he ferociously swung down the hammer accurately onto the sword, as the brand of the divine imprint began amalgamating with the sword, becoming the "energy channels" of the divine weapon.

"Hu....." Qin Wentian sucked in a deep breath, as he wondered about the result of his experiment.

Removing the Heavenly Hammer, as Qin Wentian started to use

the various tools provided to further polish and grind the weapon — just before the final step, before he'd sharpened the edge of the sword, Francis returned. His expression turned sluggish as he looked at Qin Wentian's actions, before furrowing his brows and saying, "What're you doing?"

"Grandmaster Francis, I'm trying out the polishing and grinding process." Qin Wentian candidly replied.

"What do you treat this place as? Do you know the embryonic cast and metallic liquid you wasted, was sufficient enough for me to create a divine weapon? Can you afford to compensate that?" Francis loudly thundered, as rage clouded his features, slowly stomping his way towards Qin Wentian before forcefully knocking his arms aside, as the unsharpened blade that was in Qin Wentian's hands fell onto the ground.

"Today, Grandmaster Murin will be here for an inspection. Count yourself lucky, I won't pursue this further. Scram immediately!"

Qin Wentian's expression stiffened. This Francis, although he was just a weaponsmith of average talent, was truly arrogant indeed. Qin Wentian coldly snorted as he indifferently departed.

"That useless fellow, to think that I had actually pitied him and wanted to accept him as my apprentice." Francis exclaimed in rage.

Qin Wentian at this moment, had already departed the room,

only to see there were a few figures wearing the robe of the Star River Association walking past him. The man in the center had an extraordinary disposition, and was accompanied by a pretty teenage girl, as well as an elderly fellow.

Murin, although he was the Division Leader for the weaponsmith division of the Star River Branch of the Sky Harmony City, had recently been transferred to the Royal Capital. The reason for his return today, was to inspect if the level of the weaponsmiths here had improved.

Qin Wentian and this particular man briefly passed by each other. That teenage girl lightly swept her gaze at Qin Wentian, and merely from that gaze, Qin Wentian could feel the arrogance of a weaponsmith.

“Francis, why are you so angry?” That moment, Murin and his company walked into the forging hall.

“Grandmaster Murin, division leader” Francis bowed, as the rage clouding his features melted away, replaced by a warm smile.

“Right.” Murin inclined his head, and walked inside into the interior of the forging hall, as he stated, “Let me check on the level of your progress.”

After saying this, coincidentally, he saw the sword that had fallen to the ground next to the stoneforge, as he picked it up. Looking at the failed creations of someone, may be a more accurate gauge of their true abilities.

Just as Francis wanted to interject, all of a sudden, the expression of Murin beamed with radiant joy as he turned his body towards Francis, exclaiming in surprise, “Francis, how did the standards of your forging technique have such a huge improvement?”

Francis froze, as Murin passed the sword over to him. With a slight intention of his will, Astral Energy, as well as Yuan Energy, flowed into the sword as the expression on his face got increasingly fascinated.

“How is this possible?” Francis found it unbelievable.

“To forge this sword, the materials used by you should have been the pre-mixed metallic liquid. But the inscription of the divine imprint was so exquisite to the point where it was nearly perfect, putting even myself to shame. Although it’s just a 1st level divine imprint, to be able to reach such a pinnacle, I’m afraid that even 2nd level weaponsmith masters wouldn’t be able to accomplish it.”

Traces of a smile flashed through his eyes as Murin spoke to Francis, “At the end of this year, I intend to bring with me a capable assistant to the Royal Capital. It seems that I already know who to choose. Francis, this sword was surely forged by you right?”

Francis slightly hesitated, as he grit his teeth. There was no way he could afford to miss this chance.

“Of course.”

“Fine, I’ll give you three more days. I want you to use all your efforts to forge a divine weapon, allowing me to truly see the peak-level of your skill.” Murin laughed, as he turned and left the hall.

Francis’s heart thumped wildly, as his countenance paled. Just now, he’d claimed credit without truly thinking it through, but now, how on earth could he manage to carve out the perfect form of a divine imprint? Truly, greed harmed people.

“That brat from earlier..... Right, I must find him!” Francis’ heart palpitated rapidly. He’d surely be finished if he failed to find Qin Wentian.

AGM 020 – Pressure

Feeling depressed in his heart, Qin Wentian left the Star River Association. Initially, he'd wanted to see if the divine imprint he'd inscribed was capable of forging a divine weapon, but who would've thought that before he could do so, he would be unceremoniously thrown out. But at least he had managed to understand the process of weapon creation, somewhat aiding him in his quest to gain insights on the path of weaponsmithing. If, in the future, he had the necessary materials, and was under the right sets of conditions, he ought to be able to forge a weapon by himself.

When he finally got back to the area near the Qin Residence, it had already become evening. Qin Wentian chose to enter via the main entrance, as he wanted to see what the current circumstances outside the Qin Residence were.

Qin Wentian halted his steps far off in the distance, before the entrance of the Qin Residence, only to see a group of armored soldiers surrounding the Qin Residence.

“Do they really dare to take action against our Qin Clan?” Qin Wentian's expression was somewhat unsightly. Holding the reins of the horse he was riding, he prodded the horse as he galloped towards the area that was guarded by the Qin Residence's troops.

The troops of the Qin Clan, upon seeing that it was Qin Wentian, made no moves to halt his movements, allowing him to reunite with Qin Chuan and the rest.

“Wentian, come in first.” Qin Chuan, seeing that it was Qin Wentian approaching, called out.

“Do they think they can hide there forever? The scions of the Qin Clan, including Qin Wentian, were already selected as part of the first batch. Besides, Marshal Wu will arrive soon.” The leader of the Silver Feather Legion, Icehawk, coldly laughed. The person he was waiting for would soon arrive, and thus, he had no need to hurry.

Qin Wentian walked in front of Qin Yao with a questioning look upon his face.

“Do you still remember the words said by the old master of the Ye Clan after the academy examination ended? You, me, Qin Shang, Qin Zhi — that they’d forcefully bring us away.” Qin Yao’s expression was extremely unsightly. Qin Wentian immediately recalled the words said by the old master of the Ye Clan previously. Supposedly, the current Emperor had “bestowed” a great kindness to them, and the youths of the Qin Clan with sufficient talent could go to the Godly General Military Palace for their cultivation, while in reality, they would be forcefully brought over to the military palace so that they would be under strict control.

It seemed like currently, they were going to use force to achieve their aims.

“Marshal Wu, also known as Asura Wu — his methods are ruthless, and he possesses truly tyrannical strength.” Qin Yao added. Asura Wu from the Godly General Military Palace was resoundingly famous in the Royal Capital.

“The Ye Clan clearly understands the intentions of our Qin Clan, and knew that there was no way that we would comply with the imperial edict. Now that Asura Wu is coming, I’m afraid the matter won’t be as simple as just leading the four of us away.” Qin Wentian murmured, causing the crowd to sigh, crestfallen. The reason why the Ye Clan and the Silver Feather Legion hadn’t taken any action yet, was because they were afraid of the consequences, and were somewhat terrified of the hidden strength of the Qin Clan’s — Wu King’s — martial might.

Far off in the horizon, the light of the setting sun revealed a line of shadowy silhouettes, which slowly entered into the vision of the crowd. At the forefront, were two men. One was middle aged, extremely tanned, and his gaze gave off a sinister and ruthless feel; while beside him, there was a youth about 16-17 years of age. The eyes of the youth were sharp and beastlike, and emitted an aura of danger.

“Asura Wu, and his disciple, Ye Lang from the Ye Clan.” Qin Yao stared at the duo in the distance, stating, “Ye Lang changed his name after condensing an Astral Soul from the Demonic Wolf Constellation, and is the younger cousin of Ye WuQue. He’s practicing cultivation in the Godly General Military Palace. Although he’s young, his methods are merciless, and his level of cultivation is at the peak of the Body Refinement Realm — but don’t underestimate him just because of that. I heard that because of his immense explosive power, he’s once killed a cultivator who’d just stepped into the Arterial Circulation Realm.”

“Qin Chuan.” Asura Wu icy voice rang out, as he his gaze became riveted on the members of the Qin Clan, “His Majesty has

bestowed a great kindness towards the Qin Clan — towards Qin Yao, Qin Wentian, Qin Shang and Qin Zhi. They will be allowed to return with me to the Godly General Military Palace to practice their cultivation.”

“Qin Chuan thanks his Majesty for his kindness, however, the Qin Clan had already made arrangements for the cultivation practice of our younger generation. There’s no need for Marshal Wu to worry about this.” Qin Chuan calmly replied.

Asura Wu’s lips slightly curled upwards in an unpleasant smile, only to see the youth beside him advance forward on his horse, raise his finger, and point it at Qin Chuan, “Old fogey, we gave you face yet you don’t accept it. My esteemed teacher was polite to you, but you better not let that cloud your vision. Your Qin Clan and that bunch of younger generation trash has a chance to enter the Godly General Military Palace! You should be thanking us on bent knees.”

“Audacious!” Looks of rage appeared on the faces of members of the Qin Clan. This youth from the younger generation actually pointed his finger at Qin Chuan, and even dared to say such words.

“The younger generation of Ye Clan weren’t taught any manners?” Qin Chuan cast a glance at Ye Lang.

“Manners?” Ye Lang looked at the members of the Qin Clan, his gaze filled with contempt and bloodlust, akin to that of a wild beast, as he pointed to the members of the Qin Clan behind Qin Chuan and roared, “This bunch of trash that was nurtured by the Qin Clan, do you believe that I can’t crush you with but a single

hand?”

“What an egotistical fellow, I truly want to see how you crush me to death!” A member of the Qin Clan from the younger generation couldn’t tolerate the humiliation of Ye Lang anymore, as he rushed towards Ye Lang, bellowing with rage.

“Qin Mu, come back!” Qin Chuan shouted, only to see a cruel smile displayed on the visage of Ye Lang. His body arched, and began to take the shape of a wild beast pouncing on its prey, while the chilly aura emitted from his body began to ferment to his absolute limits — to the point where his warhorse was constantly shivering, as it fell over on to the ground foaming at the mouth.

“Buzz!” The body of Ye Lang transformed into a blur, and disappeared from sight.

“What a quick speed!”

“Argh!” a sound, reeking of suffering and injuries, rang out, followed by the sound of bones breaking, as the body of Qin Mu flew overhead, landing heavily on the ground. It seemed like all the bones in his body had been snapped by an overwhelming strength.

“Kacha!” Ye Lang stomped heavily on the ground, causing huge fissures to appear. From this, it could be seen that he did indeed possess overwhelming strength. As his beastlike eyes coldly glanced at the body of Qin Mu, Ye Lang once again burst forth, as his hands formed into the shape of sharp claws, aimed directly at

the head of Qin Mu who was lying on the ground. If this vicious blow of his landed, the head of Qin Mu would surely explode.

The expressions of the Qin Clan members underwent a drastic change, as many on the scene closed their eyes. Qin Mu was one of the young talents in the Qin Clan whose strength could be considered extremely strong, with his cultivation at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm. And yet, he couldn't even face a single strike from Ye Lang. What was more terrifying, was that Ye Lang actually had intended to kill.

“Impudent.” Abruptly, the palms of Qin Chuan caught hold of Ye Lang's clawed hand an instant before he destroyed Qin Mu's head. As steady as a mountain, Ye Lang couldn't move an inch, while the Qin Mu who was lying on the ground, had cold sweat broken out on his forehead, looking straight into the eyes of Ye Lang, and was terrified beyond belief.

Ye Lang inclined his head, as he looked straight at Qin Chuan, who was in front of him. That beastlike eyes were filled with contempt as he sneered, “The young one can't handle it, so the old one has to cover for him?”

After saying this, Ye Lang retracted his arm and stalked a few steps closer to the younger members of the Qin Clan, “Do you want me to teach these trash how to fight? If one is insufficient, you can all attack me at once.”

Although Qin Chuan was infuriated, he couldn't help but to silently sigh. Although he'd stayed a long time in the Sky Harmony City, he was still clear about the ongoing of the Royal Capital. Not

to mention Ye WuQue, he knew that even the other youths of the Ye Clan, when compared to the younger generations of the Qin Clan, were still much stronger. This wasn't a matter of talent, but because of the disparity in wealth, and thus, cultivation resources.

“Arrogant, too arrogant.” The expressions of the members of Qin Clan turned ashen, as Qin Yao, unable to tolerate any longer, exclaimed, “Ye Lang, you're too unbridled!”

The gaze of Ye Lang landed on Qin Yao, as his gaze began roaming her body, pausing at the contours of the twin peaks of Qin Yao, as a lascivious smile broke out on his visage, causing the expression of Qin Yao to turn unsightly.

“Qin Yao, although your talent is ordinary, your beauty is still passable, capable of stirring my heart. How about becoming my concubine? Ye Lang stared at Qin Yao licking his lips, causing the youths of the Qin Clan to be incomparably angered. Qin Yao was the precious pearl of the Qin Clan, one of the four great beauties of the Sky Harmony City. She had outstanding looks and an outstanding figure, plus her talent was also extraordinary. To think that this Ye Lang actually behaved in such a vulgar way towards her, and even wanted her as his concubine?

Qin Yao began to walk forward, only to be held back by Qin Wentian. She turned her head back, only to see Qin Wentian staring coldly at Ye Lang. After embarking on the path of cultivation, he'd never had the chance to fully unleash his strength. Qin Wentian wanted to use Ye Lang as his first test.

“Elder sis, allow me.” Qin Wentian revealed a gentle smile as he

gazed at Qin Yao.

“Wentian, this Ye Lang’s strength is terrifying, extremely terrifying.” Qin Yao shook her head. Although Qin Wentian’s talent was illustrious, he had just stepped onto the path of cultivation. He definitely wouldn’t be a match for the ruthless Ye Lang.

“To deal with this type of scum, I’m afraid that sister Qin Yao’s hands would be dirtied.” Qin Wentian maintained his smile, as he lightly pinched Qin Yao on her cheek, causing Qin Yao to be dumbstruck, and to glare at Qin Wentian. This fellow, at such a critical moment, still had the mood to joke about. However, she understood that Qin Wentian, regardless of the urgency of the moment, would always calmly deal with situations — akin to a happy-go-lucky fellow. Even though he was an idiot, it was still heartwarming when interacting with him.

“Be careful.” Qin Yao softly whispered.

“Got it.” Qin Wentian walked forward with a smile, staring at the pair of cruel, beastlike eyes that belonged to Ye Lang. This Ye Lang was similar in age, but he was truly a malicious character. He was extremely arrogant, held nothing in high regards, and viewed everything with contempt.

“Qin Wentian.” Ye Lang, emitting an extremely oppressive aura, with hints of coldness in his gaze, looked towards Qin Wentian, “I’ll disable those hands you used to touch Qin Yao with.”

“I heard that you’re at the peak level of the Body Refinement Realm. Although I’m only at the 6th level, I do truly want to see how you’d disable my hand.” Qin Wentian indifferently replied.

“I’ll suppress my strength to the 6th level, I want you to know how weak of a worm, the Qin Clan considered to be a genius, really is.” Ye Lang’s eyes flashed, as his body flickered, bursting forward like a wolf sprinting in the wilds, causing the sound of the wind to howl with increasing volume.

The sharp claws of Ye Lang directly lunged towards the head of Qin Wentian, as cracking sounds became audible. The Heavenly Wolf Claw of his seemed to glow with a dim light, as Ye Lang had indeed suppressed his strength level. Otherwise, it would surely have been more terrifying.

Traces of cold laughter appeared in Qin Wentian’s eyes, as he saw that Ye Lang was suppressing his strength. This was totally different from his earlier demeanor. Under the pressure of the immense killing intent, as well as the aura of extreme danger, the Astral Energy within Qin Wentian body began spiraling around frenziedly, and surged towards his arms.

“Dong!” Qin Wentian stepped forward, as a thunderous roaring sound was emitted from his palms. It was akin to a soaring dragon flying through the skies, disregarding everything in it’s sight.

The chilly Heavenly Wolf Claw clashed against the Dragon Subduing Fist, causing an extremely terrifying sound to ring out. Ye Lang involuntarily let out a low-volumed roar, as he felt his sharp claws crack and splinter, as an extreme sense of danger

appeared in front of him.

“You dare lie to me?” Ye Lang’s body shuddered violently from the aftermath of the strike, as his blood surged frenziedly around his body, as he snarled. There was no way that this kind of power couldn’t possibly exist at the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm. Ye Lang visibly trembled, as all his energy erupted outwards, his whole body filled with the sounds of crackling, as he took a few steps backwards from the direct clash with Qin Wentian. He was even more dangerous now, appearing to be storing up energy.

Like a raging squall, sweeping aside all in its path, Ye Lang once again lunged forward. The terrifying chilly aura seemed to cause the atmosphere to solidify, as Qin Wentian only felt that the area around him had become the domain of that chilly aura — as if there were numerous demonic wolves rushing over to devour him.

“What a strong aura.” Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. This surge of energy was sufficient to overwhelm him, however, at this moment, the Astral Energy in his body seemed to be even more terrifying. Akin to a hurricane, the astral energy converged rapidly in his stellar meridians, before explosively being extracted out. It travelled through the pathways of the stellar meridians, and was infused in his arms. The Qin Wentian now, felt no sense of fear. He could only feel that he was filled with boundless might..

AGM 021 – Ruthless

The members of the Qin Clan felt nervous after they witnessed Ye Lang lunge towards Qin Wentian. The faint shadow of a demonic wolf had materialised, and after a moment of vibration, it let out a howl of rage before it rushed towards Qin Wentian, in an attempt to tear him apart.

“Demonic Wolf Astral Soul, no wonder there’s such a strong sense of bloodlust and a beastly aura emanating from him.” The expressions of the crowd slightly froze, only to see Qin Yao speed forward towards Qin Wentian, and release her Astral Soul in the form of an Ancient Tree.

“Ye Lang, scram.” Qin Yao delicate voice shouted, as incredibly sharp wooden swords appeared in the air around her, one after another, before flying in the direction of Ye Lang.

Tyrannical Yuan Energy transformed into divine might, as it circulating through the energy channels and meridians, and emitted a terrifying aura of unmatched strength. This was an indication of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

“Break!” Ye Lang, at this moment, was akin to a madman, as a horrifying and unbridled aura of a wild beast surged forth, breaking apart the ancient wood swords with immense strength, and continued onwards in the direction of Qin Wentian.

At this moment, the Qin Wentian’s arm had transformed into a huge hammer that seemed capable of toppling the heavens, and

glowed with a resplendent light, while suddenly metamorphosing into an azure dragon. “Roar!” The Draconic Roar of the Nine Heavens! This move was akin to a huge dragon emitting an oppressive aura, as it explosively burst forth in the direction of Ye Lang.

The icy cold aura of the demonic wolf king clashed head on with the raging azure dragon, like the force of a devastating hurricane, and both the body of Qin Wentian and Ye Lang explosively flew apart, as their feet slid backwards, leaving deep traces in the earth.

“Wentian.” Qin Yao’s expression changed drastically, as the Ancient Wood Swords enveloped his body.

Qin Wentian was knocked backwards, only stopping after colliding with the body of Qin Yao. His whole body was devoid of strength, as there were lacerations all over his fist, and fresh blood unceasingly leaked out of the wounds.

“Hu, how strong. The disparity between the different levels of cultivation was too huge.” Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. The entirety of the astral energy which he’d stored up in his body seemed to have been completely exhausted with his earlier strike, causing his body to slightly tremble with weakness.

“As expected of an Astral Soul that was condensed from the 5th Heavenly Layer; with the aid of my Stellar Meridians, I was able to temporarily utilise and condense the Astral Energy in my body for a single strike, allowing me to defend against Ye Lang’s full force attack. But doing so has completely exhausted the astral energy within my body.”

At this moment, immense shock suffused the features of Ye Lang. He'd actually been forced backwards — and not only that, the sharp claws of his Astral Soul that were currently suspended in the air actually showed signs of wounds. Qin Wentian had actually managed to wound him.

“I want you to die.” Ye Lang snarled like a wild beast, glaring at Qin Wentian. As the sound of his voice faded, he advanced forward. The beastlike aura gushing forth from his body became increasingly strong with every step he took, as he emitted intense pressure, causing the ground to sink in.

“If you continue to be so impudent, I'll no longer be as polite.” Qin Chuan, seeing that Ye Lang was still persisting with his attack, coldly stated.

Simultaneously, the eyes of Asura Wu flashed with a fierce, merciless glow. This Qin Wentian was someone that had to be eliminated.

“Go bring Qin Wentian, Qin Yao, and the rest over — those who block you mean that they've defied the imperial edict.” Asura Wu icily intoned.

“Get them.” Ye Mo and Icehawk both commanded at the same time. Instantly, an oppressive wave of pressure permeated the air, as the soldiers, wielding long spears in their hands, began to force their way through, moving in the direction of the Qin Residence, creating a stifling atmosphere.

Just as the command of Ye Mo and Icehawk rang out, the archers of the Qin Clan, rapidly mobilised themselves into formations. The bull horn bows that they were equipped with had all been pulled back to the point that the shapes of their bows resembled a full moon, emanating a sense of beauty that came from immense strength.

“Looks like the Qin Clan are really prepared to rebel.” Ye Mo coldly sneered, as he flew up to the skies, speeding towards the direction of the archers.

“Pfft, pfft, pfff.....” Bow strings twanged, as arrows filled the skies. They flew in the direction of the Silver Feather Legion, transformed the skies into a rain of arrows, and emitted a sharp whistling sound.

Similarly, there were many arrows aimed at Ye Mo, who was soaring through the air. Two shadowy astral projections appeared atop the forehead of Ye Mo, as he released both of his Astral Souls together. The first was the Northern Goshawk Astral Soul, granting him speed and nimbleness, as well as ferocious strength; the second Astral Soul was as tall as a huge mountain. He had condensed a mountain-type Astral Soul, leading to the immense size formed when he condensed it. It was the Stone Mountain Astral Soul, which allowed his skin to be coated with a layer of mountain rocks, increasing his defense immensely.

The gaze of Ye Mo was as sharp as a hunting goshawk, as his rock-covered hands explosively swept out with a strength that was capable of toppling mountains and overturning the seas, as they

disintegrated the arrows around him.

Ye Mo was a cultivator at the Yuanfu Realm, and he had condensed two types of Astral Souls, and had even opened his 3rd Astral Gate. It was just that he hadn't managed to condensed his 3rd Astral Soul. If not, his strength would be even more terrifying.

At this moment, behind the archers, appeared two elders. One of them swept his gaze towards Ye Mo, as he too, soared up the skies.

“Martial Defenders?” Asura Wu was still atop his warhorse, as the look in his eyes turned frosty. These two figures who had just appeared, should've been those defenders of ages past, who stayed by the side of Qin Wu when his fame shook the world. However currently, those defenders no longer evoked the same awe-inspiring glory when compared to them in the past.

“Retreat back to the Qin's Residence.” Looking at the advance of the opposition's forces, Qin Chuan coldly hollered, as the troops and members of the Qin Clan retreated backwards.

Ye Lang, akin to a wild beast, rushed in the direction of Qin Wentian. Under the protection of strong guards by his side, he was able to take his time and unleash his strength fully. The members of the Qin Clan who were barring his path were all injured grievously, with no exceptions.

Qin Yao led Qin Wentian, as they unceasingly retreated. Her expression turned ugly as she saw Ye Lang — that beast actually wanted to kill Qin Wentian.

“Let me block him.” The shadow of a figure appeared in front of Qin Yao and Qin Wentian, as he swept his leg, attacking forward.

“Thud!” The hands of Ye Lang easily blocked the leg that had the strength of 10,000 jin, as he trapped the leg with only one hand and a cruel glint flashed through Ye Lang’s eyes.

“Qin Rao, retreat.” Qin Yao’s expression froze in horror, but it was too late. The right hand of Ye Lang, in the shape of a knife, descended violently downwards on the thigh of Qin Rao. And abruptly, Qin Rao let out a ear-splitting howl of pain, as he fainted into unconsciousness, with a face drained of blood. The bones of his leg were snapped, as fresh blood splurged and overflowed onto the ground.

By then, Qin Yao and the rest had already safely retreated to the entrance of the Qin Residence, as even more troops rushed out, forming a stronger protective screen. Ye Lang inclined his head, and cast a glance at Qin Wentian. He was smiling hideously, as he turned his gaze back on Qin Rao who was on the floor. His fist struck downwards, landing upon the head of Qin Rao. Immediately, the gory remains of Qin Rao’s head painted the skies brilliant red, spraying onto the robes of Ye Lang, as a malevolent glint flashed in his eyes.

“Qin Yao, I will make you become my plaything — my slave, my s*x toy.” Ye Lang’s voice coldly resounded, as he licked the side of his lips, which were sprayed with the blood of Qin Rao,

Qin Yao's body shuddered uncontrollably, immensely angered.

“Everyone retreat.” Qin Chuan hollered, as Asura Wu led even more troops forward. Currently, despite the fact that the Qin Clan had summoned the Martial Defenders, their strength was still not a match against their opponent. As such, the younger generation had to be protected — there could be no casualties, as they were the hopes of the clan.

Qin Yao's eyes were filled with the blazing flames of rage, as if she hadn't heard Qin Chuan's command. But at that moment, Qin Wentian caught hold of Qin Yao's hands as he reiterated, “Sister, let us enter the residence.”

“Wentian, Qin Rao.....” Qin Yao eyes were red. Although Qin Rao wasn't her blood brother, he was still someone from the Qin Clan. His ancestor had followed Qin Wu through countless battles, and even took on the surname of the Qin Clan. The Qin Clan had never treated them as outsiders; they were all as close as kin — brothers and sisters.

“I will definitely avenge him. Definitely.” Qin Wentian calmly spoke, as his voice became filled with cold anger. At this moment, his normally calm eyes, were filled with a light madness, akin to that of a wild tiger, as he glared hatefully at Ye Lang and stated, “Remember me. The one who will kill you, is me.”

Qin Wentian vowed that he would definitely kill Ye Lang.

“He will surely not be the last to fall.” Ye Lang placed his foot on

top of the body of Qin Rao, as his eyes glazed over — akin to a demon's possession, looking as Qin Wentian pulled Qin Yao, and retreated back to the Qin Residence. At the same time, the might of the Defenders slowly forced the Silver Feather Legion back. With the defenders present, it wasn't so easy for them to attack the Qin Clan.

After Qin Wentian and the rest entered the Qin Residence, the entirety of the Qin Clan was rushing about in chaos. They hadn't thought that the Ye Clan and the Silver Feather Legion would encircle them, and wanted to annihilate them.

"Yao`er. Bring Wentian and the rest back to rest first. All of you just need to focus on your cultivation. Leave the things here to us." Qin Chuan's gaze enveloped the members of the younger generation, as his countenance grew heavy.

"Father, we want to stay and help." Qin Yao, unwilling to hide in safety, interjected.

"I said to go back." Qin Chuan angrily berated, "You all have to remember this: All of you are the future hope of our Qin Clan, and now that our Qin Clan is facing unprecedented danger, if the Qin Clan is defeated, even if we have to sacrifice our lives, we will still ensure your safety above all else."

"The Qin Clan... will never be defeated." Tears rolled down Qin Yao's eyes.

"I'm just saying what if. Anyway, since they've started this first,

your grandfather should know what choice to make. As long as we can hold out for a few days, the Qin Clan, will have hope to survive.” Qin Chuan explained, causing Qin Yao and the rest to let out a sigh of relief. It seemed like the old Patriarch of the Qin Clan still had some tricks up his sleeves.

“Father, I shall go and cultivate.” Qin Wentian said to Qin Chuan, after which, he turned and left, causing Qin Yao and the rest to freeze. No one noticed that the hands of Qin Wentian were clenched into fists, with traces of blood, as the nails of his hands pierced into his palms.

Qin Chuan glanced at the back view of Qin Wentian, as his eyes flickered, before lowly intoning, “Yao`er, by any chance, if there are any mishaps, I want you to protect Wentian, do you understand?”

Qin Yao’s body violently trembled, as she look directly at her father, “Father, if Wentian lives, so do I.”

“Child.” Qin Chuan looked at Qin Yao, with a doting look in his eyes as he stated, “This child Wentian, has wisdom beyond his peers, and possesses heaven-shaking talent. I hope that in the future, the Qin Clan will have someone that’s strong enough to subvert the current emperor.”

AGM 022 – Francis's Visit

The pain that Qin Wentian felt was unbearable. He'd personally witnessed Qin Rao's head be smashed by Ye Lang — as he was killed cruelly — and that hideous smile on Ye Lang's visage... that was something he would never be able to forget.

“Ye Lang!” Both his hands clenched into fists. Qin Wentian sat down upon the training ground, drew in a deep breath, and calmed himself; a blood debt most definitely had to be repaid in blood.

The skies had already darkened, and Qin Wentian in that instant, seemed to have entered into a world of his own, as the hubbub of the external world was no longer able to affect him. Raising his head to the skies, a brilliant astral light shone out, and a faint shadow of the Heavenly Hammer appeared. At that instant, high up in the 5th Heavenly Layer, the Constellation of the Heavenly Hammer began to cascade resplendent rays of astral light downwards, merging together with the shine of his astral soul, tracing magnificent lines of light in the night sky.

The two Yuan Meteor Stones that were placed by Qin Wentian on top of the Astral Soul he released, were actually attracted to the resplendent rays of Astral Light cascading downwards, as they floated up into the air. The energy released by the Yuan Meteor Stones merged together with the magnificent lines of light, before being absorbed by the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, undergoing refinement and nourishment — transforming into Heavenly Hammer Astral Energy — before flowing towards Qin Wentian's four limbs, bones, inner organs, energy channels and meridians.

A Stellar Martial Cultivator that had condensed an Astral Soul could only absorb Astral Qi from the constellation that they had formed an innate link with. Ye Lang's Astral Soul was of the Demonic Wolf Constellation, and thus, the Astral Qi he absorbed was permeated with an unbridled wild beast aura characteristic. As for Qin Wentian, his Astral Soul was condensed from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation, and thus he was endowed with tyrannical attack as well as a talent for forging.

Previously, when Qin Wentian had directly absorbed the Astral Energy contained within the Yuan Meteor Stone, it had absolutely no way to compare to the Astral Energy which he absorbed from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation. And thus, for greater efficiency in processing the energy absorbed, Qin Wentian first used his Astral Soul to absorb the astral energy contained within the Yuan Meteor Stones, before allowing the Astral Energy from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation from the 5th Heavenly Layer to “purify” the astral energy before absorbing them into his body. Despite the fact that he knew that doing so would cause some of the Astral Energy to disperse.

After a short moment, when Qin Wentian felt that his whole body had been infused with Astral Energy, he circulated the Astral Energy around his body as he activated the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique. Instantly, cracking and rumbling sounds rang out as violent vibrations shook his body. His Qi and blood surged, akin to the cracking waves of the oceans — to the point where all of his muscles started to convulse, as the tyrannical energy tempered his body by forcing him to break his limits over and over again, until his fleshly body became even stronger, and more perfect.

The second day, the news about the Qin Residence getting encircled, was spreaded throughout Sky Harmony City. There were many of those who came to the outside of Qin Residence that sighed ruefully – The Majestic Qin Clan of the past, was soon to be nothing but a remnant of history.

Outside the Qin Residence, were the Chu Dragon Guards of the Sky Harmony City, as well as the Silver Feather Legion led by Icehawk, and the troops of Asura Wu. These three powerful forces had the Qin Residence trapped in such a tight web that not even a drop of water could leak out. Intermittently, they would send troops to test the defense of the Qin Residence, while the members of the Qin Clan resisted stubbornly, sending their strongest Martial Cultivators, as well as their Defenders, to guard the main entrances.

The passerbyers and outsiders who were watching the scene, sighed in their hearts, as they felt that the Qin Clan evidently wasn't able to resist much longer, and would must likely be annihilated.

“There are only two more days to the Annual Offerings Day. I wonder if the Qin Clan will still be able to survive till next year.” This thought echoed through the hearts of many people. Annual Offerings Day was the day before the end of the year, and it was also a day for people to offer sacrifices to their ancestors.

A stifling sense of pressure permeated the entire atmosphere in the Qin Residence, as Qin Chuan and the important members of the clan gathered inside the war hall to discuss tactics and strategies.

“The three great legions: as long as our opponents unleash a command, we have no choice but to clash directly — and based on the strength of our Qin Clan, we don’t even have any hope at victory.” Qin Chuan gaze roamed about, looking at everyone, as he stated.

“How strong are our Defenders?” Someone asked, as that person looked to Qin Chuan. Don’t mention external parties, even people of the Qin Clan themselves were unsure of the actual strength of their Defenders.

“The Defenders are all elites of our Qin Clan, and can be considered stronger than the vast majority of the troops out there. However, taking into account the entire perspective, the disparity between the strength of our forces are still too great.”

“How about those who were loyal to the Wu King in the past? Would they lead their troops to our rescue?”

“The old patriarch should have his own arrangement, but water from afar wasn’t able to extinguish a near fire. In addition to that, the troops that belong to the three powers seemed to be in no hurry to initiate the attacks, yet still seemed tremendously confident — this is what I’m worrying about.” Qin Chuan sighed. The war hall was only filled with his voice, with no one else proposing any other strategies.

After a moment of contemplation, Qin Chuan commanded, “Once the fighting begins, I will mobilise a division of troops, and

put them under the command of Qin He and Qin Ye. Both of you are responsible for protecting the safety of Wentian, Qin Yao, and the rest of the younger generation. Remember this clearly, you aren't allowed to clash with our enemies, and are only allowed to escape.

“Big Brother, I'm not a coward.” Qin Ye bellowed with rage.

“We have already reached the limit of our cultivation levels. The younger generations are the hope of the Qin Clan. I did place them under your charge, but this doesn't mean that I'm causing you to become a coward — do you understand now?” Qin Chuan slammed his palm against the table, as he roared in anger, causing the expression of Qin Ye to tighten.

“This matter isn't open for discussion. Those who defy my orders, aren't fit to be a member of my Qin Clan.”

The words of Qin Chuan, caused everyone to be speechless. Qin Yao and the rest of the younger generations, Qin Wentian included, were unhappy with the decision too, as they nurtured the anger in their hearts, wanting nothing more than to clash against their enemies.

“Clan Leader.” At this moment, there was someone who had entered the hall from the outside as he spoke, “Clan Leader, Grandmaster Francis from the Star River Association requests an audience with you.”

“Star River Association?” Traces of astonishment flickered in Qin

Chuan's eyes, as he replied, "Invite him in."

Shortly after, Francis entered the great hall, and upon his arrival, Qin Wentian involuntarily displayed a weird expression on his face.

"Francis greets Master Qin Chuan."

"Grandmaster Francis, please do not stand on ceremony with me, may I know the reason behind your visit?" Qin Chuan was extremely polite. The status of weaponsmiths were extraordinary indeed.

"I'm here to look for Young Master Wentian." Francis revealed a bitter smile, as he cast a sidelong glance at Qin Wentian. That day, Murin had announce that he would select Francis to accompany him to the Royal City, and Francis, in a moment of greed, had lay false claims to the creation of the divine weapon which Murin inspected. Never had he thought that Murin would want him to duplicate the creation process again, which caused him to fall into depression, and thus, he had no choice but to question Lin Yue, and finally discovered the identity of that young man who wanted to become an apprentice, who was actually Qin Wentian. Although the Qin Clan was surrounded by enemies, Francis still had no choice but to choose to visit.

Luckily, he was someone from the Star River Association, and the people outside all gave him some face, as he randomly made up a reason for his visit.

The faces of the members of the Qin Clan all displayed weird expressions; why did a grandmaster want to look for Qin Wentian?

“Is anything the matter?: Qin Wentian indifferently asked.

“I wish to cooperate with little brother Wentian to forge a divine weapon together, I wonder if little brother would be willing to grant me the chance.” Francis could feel that the attitude Qin Wentian was displaying towards him was extremely cold, and as such, he had no choice but to smile, as he asked for help, with a pitiful tone in his voice.

QIn Wentian’s heart lightly shuddered. This Francis actually wanted to forge a divine weapon together with me? Could it be that the previous divine weapon that I created randomly had already surpassed his standards? If not, there should be no reason why he would look for me.

“It seems like the divine imprint from the memory fragment which I gained insights into, was extraordinary.” Qin Wentian silently thought, that there this possibility existed, as he involuntarily let out a cold laugh, as he replied, “Currently, my Qin Residence is in a moment of crisis, I have no time to accompany Grandmaster Francis in the forging of divine weapons. And as for the embryonic cast and metallic liquid which I used previously, I can’t afford to pay for them, please depart.”

Francis bitterly smiled as he looked at Qin Wentian, lowering his voice as he implored, “Young Master Wentian, please let me know if you have any conditions.”

“Firstly, tell me the reason why you want to forge a divine weapon with me.” Qin Wentian stared at Francis the earlier weapon created was just a first level divine weapon, therefore Francis should be able to forge it too. Although the carving of the divine imprint couldn’t be compared to the one inscribed by Qin Wentian, there was no need for Francis to lower himself to such an extent, begging for help from Qin Wentian.

Francis displayed an awkward expression.

“If Grandmaster doesn’t wish to reveal the reason, then there’s nothing to discuss.”

Francis cast a glance at Qin Chuan. Qin Chuan understood his meaning as he waved his hands, signalling for the majority of the Qin Clan members to depart from the hall.

“Grandmaster, you can say it now.” Qin Wentian stated, causing the expression on Francis’s face to stiffen, as he sighed in his heart. He had no choice left, and thus, he revealed the facts that happened after Qin Wentian left that day. After hearing the reason, Qin Chuan and the rest, all had expressions of startlement and awe on their faces – Qin Wentian could actually inscribe divine imprints!

“Wentian, I could send you to the Star River Association. That Murin, he would definitely ensure your safety.” Qin Chuan’s eyes flickered with a sharp light. This Murin was the division leader for the Star River Association’s weaponsmith division, and was

endowed with an exceedingly strong ability with matters related to forging, thus elevating his status and position. If he were to help, the Qin Clan would surely survive.

Grandmaster Francis who was standing at the side, had an anxious expression on his face. The current him felt as if he was caught in between a rock and a hard place.

“Grandmaster Francis.” Qin Wentian looked to Francis as he said, “There’s no way I would forge a divine weapon together with you. However, the reason why you wanted to accompany Murin, was purely to raise your ability in the forging of weapons. I’ve gained insights into plenty of divine imprints, and could share some with you, so you too, would be able to explain to Grandmaster Murin.”

The countenance of Francis froze, it seemed like it was impossible for him to get Qin Wentian to agree to forging a divine weapon together. However, if Qin Wentian would really be willing to pass down the divine imprints to him, it wouldn’t be too bad as well — at most, he would just apologise and hand over the divine imprints to Murin.

“If that’s the case, I would have to thank Young Master Wentian.” Francis courteously replied.

“Wait a moment.” Qin Wentian walked out of the grandhall, causing bizarre expressions to be displayed on the faces of Qin Chuan and the rest.

“Big brother, you’ve taught Wentian regarding the inscription of divine imprints?” Qin He curiously asked.

“Divine Imprints are exceedingly mysterious and complicated. I, myself, haven’t gained sufficient insights regarding them yet, how could I still teach it to Wentian.” Qin Chuan shook his head, as he intoned in a low voice, “Strange..... Qin Yao, Wentian has always been close to you, do you know anything regarding this matter?”

“That little bad egg still hides many secrets from me.” Qin Yao pouted, however, she still hoped that Qin Wentian could accept the lifeline offered by the Star River Association. This way, the Star River Association would ensure his safety and extend their protection to the Qin Clan, resolving the crisis.

After some time had passed, Qin Wentian returned with many pieces of iron sheets, causing even more bizarre looks to be displayed on the faces of Francis, and on the rest of the Qin Clan members. But as Francis received the iron sheet which Wentian passed to him, and after a thorough inspection, his heart trembled in excitement – these were divine imprints, and not only that, they were all intricately, exquisitely inscribed. How on earth had Qin Wentian managed to inscribe such perfect imprints?

“A Forging-type Astral Soul.” Francis’ heart shuddered, as he stared at Qin Wentian

“Right, my Astral soul is a Forging-type Astral Soul, condensed from a constellation at the 3rd Heavenly Layer. I could gift these iron sheets to you, and moreover, if Grandmaster Francis is willing to supply us with some divine weapons, I’m willing to use divine

imprints to exchange for them.” The words of Qin Wentian almost caused excitement to bubbled out of Francis. The divine imprints of Qin Wentian were incomparably exquisite. As long as he could gain insights into one of them, in the future, creating a top grade 1st level divine weapon would be extremely simple for him.

“Okay, I shall bid you farewell first.” Francis nodded his head heavily, he decided to fess up after he returned. He believe that with this imprints, Grandmaster Murin wouldn’t blame him too much.

Qin Wentian’s expression flickered, as he watched Francis departing. He intentionally displayed his forging talent, wanting to borrow the mouth of Francis to relay the news to Grandmaster Murin. With the strength and status of Murin, there might be a chance that he could resolve this crisis for the Qin Clan.

“Father, I shall depart first.” Qin Wentian departed from the grand hall, as he made preparations to gain insights into the unfathomable and mysterious, 2nd level divine imprints.

AGM 023 – Crisis

Qin Wentian felt that time had passed rapidly in the past two days, as he had abandoned thoughts of anything other than cultivating in a frenzy, while also pondering over the mystery of 2nd level divine imprints. After he exhausted the energy of two Yuan Meteor Stones, he finally stepped into the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm. As the Astral Energy in his body seeped into his inner organs, his breath strengthened, and every breath he took seemed to contain surging levels of energy, spirit, and qi. Any casual strike of his fist possessed the gigantic strength of approximately 50 bulls. Qin Wentian felt that it was still insufficient, and he hated the fact that he did not have enough time to increase his level of cultivation, to further enhance his strength.

As for the other members of the Qin Clan, it felt as though a year had passed for every day that passed. The combined attacks from the three forces on the outside were getting more and more ferocious, and there would be casualties and death every now and then. The tension in the air, as well as the flames of hatred, already rose to the highest point. There were those in the Qin Clan, who suggested that they should go all out, rushing and clashing directly with their enemies. Even if they died, they had to kill the enemies out there.

Qin Wu didn't agree. Instead, he gathered the members of the Qin Clan together in the memorial hall, and made offerings to honor their Ancestor Qin Wu, as it was the Annual Offerings Day.

TL Note:(both the old patriarch and the ancestor of the Qin Clan are named Qin Wu. Same pronunciation but different meaning.)

After they had paid their respect, the members of the Qin Clan left the memorial hall. As they walked into the Qin Residence, a clansman brought over a body, causing many of the clan members to holler, “Patriarch, let’s rush out! If this continues on, we will all be dead.”

“Don’t worry, I’m the one they want. I have already contacted our old friends and supporters of our Qin Clan. Once I’m imprisoned in the Royal Capital, they will immediately mobilise their troops to save me.” Qin Wu continued, “As long as I’m in the hands of our enemies, they would be rest assured.”

“Father, no! We can’t let you risk yourself like this,” Qin Chuan shook his head, as the meaning of Qin Wu was clear. He had wanted to sacrifice himself by jumping into the trap voluntarily.

“The prosperity of the Qin Clan, that your grandfather fought for, has degenerated in my generation, but there’s no way I could see it being destroyed in my own hands.” Qin Wu bitterly smiled, as he walked forth to the place where Qin Wentian and the rest were standing, before rubbing Qin Wentian’s head as he gently said to Qin Chuan, “Protect Wentian and the rest well, you must ensure that no harm comes to them.”

Qin Chuan, with reddened eyes, heavily bowed his head.

“Grandpa Qin!” A surging wave of depression arose in Qin Wentian’s heart. Was there really no way to resolve this crisis?”

“Patriarch, Clan Leader! The Star River Association has arrived.” At this moment, one of the clansman reported this, causing astonishment to flash in Qin Wentian’s eyes. Very quickly, the astonishment transformed into hope. Maybe, this was the chance they had been waiting for.

“Quickly, invite them in.” Qin Chuan stated, and shortly afterwards, the silhouettes of a few figures could be seen walking over, and the few others in the back, were carrying a few, heavy baggages.

“Patriarch Qin, my name is Murin, and I’m here to look for Young Master Wentian.” This person, was the one who Qin Wentian had passed by that day at the Star River Association, by chance – Murin. Other than Murin himself, he also brought along a few companions namely the arrogant girl from before, and of course, Francis.

Qin Wu lightly nodded his head, as Qin Wentian walked forward as he replied, “Greetings to Grandmaster Murin.”

“Qin Wentian, I have inspected the divine imprints that you inscribed. Not only are they extremely intricate, the aura they exude was extraordinary too. You possess the qualifications to join my Star River Association, and become my disciple.” Murin stated, as he looked at Qin Wentian.

“Grandmaster, if you would please.” Qin Wentian didn’t reply right away, as he passed the divine imprints which he had inscribed onto iron sheets over to Murin. Murin’s eyes flashed with a resplendent light, this young man in front of him could

actually inscribe 2nd level divine imprints. Not only that, the design of the imprints as well as the runic lines were extremely exquisite, and not to mention that the types of divine imprints inscribed, was something that not even Murin had seen before.

“If I agree to Grandmaster Murin’s request, and join the Star River Association, would Grandmaster Murin be willing to protect my Qin Clan?” Qin Wentian looked at Murin, as he beseeched.

Murin froze, before lightly shaking his head, “The troubles of the Qin Clan are too complicated, and within it, there are too many unknown variables. Although I’m from the Star River Association, I don’t have the power to interfere too much with this. However, I can guarantee that as long as you agree to my request, I can immediately take you to safety.”

“Wentian, agree to his requests.” Qin Wu and Qin Chuan both urged. However, Qin Wentian was extremely disappointed. If the Qin Clan could not be protected, and he was the only one who left, seeking safety while the rest of the clan was in danger, what would that make him?

As he thought of that, Qin Wentian shook his head, “Grandmaster Murin, I’m unable to accept your request.”

“Please reconsider, considering your talent, as long as you agree, in the future, you would have whatever you want, including the chance to avenge your Qin Clan.” Murin persuaded.

“Wentian!” Qin Chuan and the rest had their gazes all on Qin

Wentian, this child!

However, Qin Wentian still insisted on not accepting, “If you can guarantee the safety of my Qin Clan, I will definitely accept.”

Murin looked to Qin Wentian, as he bitterly smiled and shook his head, “My abilities are insufficient, however, I still do not wish to lose a talent such as you. How about temporarily becoming a guest of my Star River Association, while you consider my request? This way, although I have no way to interfere with the troubles that the Qin Clan is currently facing, I believe that as long as you manage to arrive at my Star River Association as a guest, nobody would dare to make any moves with ill-intent towards you once you are there.”

Qin Wentian’s eyes shined with a luster as he bowed slightly, “Thank you Grandmaster Murin. I’m willing to temporarily become a guest of the Star River Association.”

“Great! I hope you will arrive safely at the Star River Association then. I will wait for you.” Murin patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders, as he left. Francis, who was standing behind Murin, waved his hands for the servants come forward. They unwrapped the baggages, revealing a plethora of divine weapons that was lying on the ground.

“These are the entirety of my creations. Eight top-grade 1st level divine weapons, and 37 mid-grade 1st level divine weapons.” Francis had frantically created as many divine weapons as he could within the last two days, and had brought them all to here.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian passed a iron sheet with a 2nd level divine imprint inscribed on it, to Francis. Francis expressed joy and admiration, akin to madness after the trade, and too, departed from the Qin Clan.

“These divine weapons, would be able to increase the strength of our Qin Residence by a certain extent, Wentian, choose what you want, and as for the rest, Qin Chuan you are responsible for distributing them.” Qin Wu commanded. Qin Wentian nodded his head, as after some contemplations, he decided to choose a long spear. A spear was akin to a dragon, violent and tyrannical, which suited him.

“Ah... ” A voice filled with terror shouted out, causing the short-lived peace of the moment earlier to be disrupted. In the four directions, a rain of fire arrows could be seen descending from the skies, and an instant later, the territory of the Qin Residence was set ablaze. Obviously, the combined troops of the three forces have decided to commence their true attacks.

Qin Wu’s body flickered, as he rushed outside the Qin Residence.

“Father!” Qin Chuan immediately rushed out, following the silhouette of Qin Wu. Meanwhile, chaos abounded everywhere in the Qin Residence. Those with the ability to fight, went off to bolster the ranks of the Qin Clan’s troops, while the defenders remained guarding at their designated strategic positions.

Soon after, once Qin Wu appeared, Asura Wu waved his hands

and the forces under their command stopped their attacks. However, at this moment, the fiery glow of the blazing flames that currently assailed the Qin Residence was so intense that it had already reached the heavens, and many enemy troops who were taking advantage of the chaos had already infiltrated the Qin Residence. They were engaged in battles with the defenders.

Upon looking at the scene that was occurring right in front of their eyes, the external spectators all sighed in their hearts. It was as if they were witnessing the Qin Clan's annihilation in front of their eyes.

“Asura Wu, I’ll leave with you, but you have to spare the rest of my clan.”

Qin Wu slowly walked in the direction of Asura Wu and the rest of the enemy troops.

“Since you’re so straightforward, naturally, I will spare the members of your clan.” Asura Wu smiled, “But the prerequisite was that I have to be able to guarantee that you have no tricks up your sleeves, and that you’ll leave peacefully with me.”

As the words of his voice faded, two knights who were brandishing their spears advanced towards Qin Wu.

Qin Chuan and the rest had their hands tightly clenched into fist, as rivulets of sweat flowed. They were all extremely nervous.

Abruptly, the two knights concurrently readied their spears in a stance, as they struck out with immense strength. Two “pop”

sounds rang out, only for them see that both of the spears were directly embedded into both of Qin Wu's thighs, cleanly piercing through both them. As fresh blood splurged out, two huge bloody cavities had appeared.

“FATHER!”

“PATRIARCH!”

Qin Chuan and the rest of the clan members bellowed in rage, and rushed forward, but the thunderous voice of Qin Wu stopped them in their tracks. “Don't move.”

They saw the body of Qin Wu collapse to the ground, evidently no longer able to stand up. The expressions of the Qin Clan members turned ashen, filled with the burning flames of rage and hatred, while the warhorse of Asura Wu, slowly trotted over to the side of Qin Wu, looking down at Qin Wu, as a malevolent glint sparkled in his eyes. “Old Man Qin Wu, a truly decisive man. However, I haven't completed my sentence. I will spare the Qin Clan on the condition that they stop their resistance — and the members of the younger generations whom I mentioned earlier are still coming with me.”

After saying that, the cold voice of Asura Wu commanded, “Escort Qin Wu away!”

There were many warriors who pointed their spears at Qin Wu, as they proceeded forward — as if they were hesitating out of fear of him. However, Qin Wu no longer had the strength to resist, and

thus was escorted away by them. As he was led away, he summoned his strength and shouted out a last sentence. “Qin Chuan, remember what I said.”

“Big brother, kill, kill them all!” Qin Ye’s eyes were filled with rage, almost bordering on insanity.

“Qin He, Qin Ye, listen to my orders. Escort Qin Yao, Qin Wentian and the rest out of here.” Qin Chuan stared at the back of his father, as his gaze turned cold, and a terrifying note appeared in his voice. Qin Ye initially wanted to argue, but upon seeing the look that Qin Chuan shot him, his heart trembled violently as he acquiesced, “Big brother, I’ll obey your orders. Let’s move out!”

After which, Qin Ye led the members of the younger generation, retreating back to the Qin Residence. Qin Wentian turned his back, seeing the far off silhouette of Qin Wu, as well as that malevolent gaze of Asura Wu, an unquenching flame began to burn in his heart.

“As for the rest, KILL THEM!” Qin Chuan commanded, and instantly, the troops of the Qin Clan released their Astral Souls, while advancing forward as the sound of clashes formed a cacophony resounding in the air, filled with blood, solemnness, and tragedy.

War horses galloped forward, as the three forces moved like a raging wind, surging forward to meet the onslaught of the Qin’s troops, and instantly erupted into a bloody battle.

“We will escape through the West Gate. Big Brother has already arranged for a defender there, who’s waiting to escort us.” Qin He led the younger generations, as they broke into a mad sprint. And amidst that chaos, Qin Yao and Qin Wentian respectively sprinted in the direction of the place that they’d stayed.

“Second Uncle, I will go and meet up with mother — you guys go on to the west gate first.” Qin Yao’s eyes were filled with tears. She’d witnessed her father be embroiled in bloody battles, but yet, she was escaping alone.

Very quickly, sprinting madly, Qin Wentian and Qin Yao arrived at the courtyard that they stayed in. Qin Yao went to look for her mother while Qin Wentian wanted to find Uncle Black. Uncle Black was sitting peacefully within the training grounds, and appeared extremely tranquil, as he passed a star-shaped item over to Qin Wentian as he said, “Wentian, when your life is in absolute danger, inject Astral Energy into this to activate it.”

“Uncle Black, come with me.” Qin Wentian wanted to carry Uncle Black on his back, only to see Uncle Black stuffing the star-shaped item into his hands as he said, “Relax, even if the Qin Clan lost the battle, and the enemy troops killed all the loyal troops and descendants of the Qin Clan, no one will bother about an unrelated, old man like me. After all, the Royal Clan would still want their face.”

“No way.” Qin Wentian knew that Uncle Black feared that he would burden him, as he replied with rage coloring his tone.

“Trust my judgement, all these years, when have I ever been

wrong before.?” Uncle Black smiled, as he continued on, “Remember this: you’re only allowed to use this, when your life is in absolute danger. Quickly go, don’t burden the rest of the Qin Clan members.”

Qin Wentian retreated a few steps, as he knelt onto the ground, kowtowing three times before he left. All these years, Uncle Black was the one who’d educated him and taken care of him. He understood the personality of Uncle Black extremely well. Once Uncle Black had decided on something, nothing would be able to change his mind. Just as Uncle Black had said, even if the Qin Clan was defeated, the enemy troops were still the representatives of the Royal Clan, and they wouldn’t massacred the ordinary workers and unrelated people of the Qin Clan wantonly. Uncle Black was not someone of importance in the Qin Clan, and would be safer here, compared to coming with him. After all, Qin Wentian was someone on the wanted list. If Uncle Black came with him, he might be in even graver danger instead.

AGM 024 – A Cold Heart

The Qin Residence had a total of four gates—the North Gate, South Gate, East Gate, and West Gate. With Qin Wu captured and the Qin Residence on fire, the members of the Qin clan continuously rushed out from the four entrances four entrances in an attempt to escape. Other than Qin Chuan, who was facing the enemy troops at the East Gate, there were troops mobilised at the Southern and North Gate to help break through the enclosure set by their enemies, enabling some of the members of the Qin Clan to escape. As for the more important members of Qin Clan, they were all gathered at the West Gate.

“Quickly.” Qin He urged as he saw Qin Wentian and Qin Yao sprinting towards him. With Qin He urging them on, Qin Wentian and Qin Yao stepped on the ground and leaped through the air, landing on the backs of warhorses that were already prepared for them.

“Go.” Qin He led the warhorses forward. As they rushed out, a group of defenders appeared in front of their entourage, equipping the bull horn bows on their back, spears in their right hands, and swords on the left side of their saddles. They were ready to engage in battle using different weapons as the circumstances dictated.

Rumbling sounds rang out, causing the earth to vibrate with gallops from the warhorses. Qin Wentian turned his head, putting on a steeled face. However, he was unable to prevent a glistening tear from rolling down his face as he glanced at the place where he had lived for the more than ten years. This, he swore, was his last tear. Today was the last day of the year. After the year passed, he would truly be considered sixteen years old and henceforth a

person of Jiang Hu. As a person of Jiang Hu, he was only allowed to shed blood, and not tears.....

The chilly wind blew past his cheeks, bringing with it a sense of melancholy. Qin Wentian and the rest madly rode their forces westward, only to see the bodies of many figures suddenly springing out from both sides of the luxurious street. Upon seeing the figures' faces, the members of the Qin Clan all revealed a look of intense rage.

Those who were present included the old man from the Ye Clan, Ye Mo, Ye Lang, and also Bai Clan leader—Bai Qingsong. Clearly, the Bai Clan had joined the encirclement of troops that surrounded the Qin Residence. This wolf in sheep's clothing was a wolf that was brought by none other than their own hands!

The defenders had no intentions to stop, clutching their spears tightly as they rode atop their warhorses. They drew the bull horn bow from their backs in a flash, placing three arrows on the bow strings, ready to be fired. The arrows twanged out in rapid succession, and the astral light trailed the arrows they shot out, emitting a terrifying whistling sound that struck fear in the hearts of many, particularly from the arrows fired by the defenders at the front.

“Plof, plof, plof.....” Akin to a burst of lightning, arrows after arrows accurately and cleanly pierced right through the throats of their enemies. Not only that, the arrows still retained their strength after piercing through, continuing to fly forward.

“Kill!” Qin He coldly commanded. He knew that the defenders

were absolute elites in terms of strength, and there was even one who was at the Yuanfu level, capable of clashing directly against Ye Mo.

Riding on a warhorse, Qin Wentian pulled out the long spear from his back, grasping it with his right hand. The spear felt like an extension of his arm as he circulate the Astral Energy within his body, infusing the spear with it.

Fresh blood sprayed like a fountain in the air in front of him, appearing even more brilliant and enchantingly beautiful under the shining rays of sunlight. Qin He and Qin Ye had released their Astral Souls and were fighting together alongside the defenders against Ye Lang's forces. A rider filled with killing intent galloped forward on his warhorse towards Qin Wentian.

A long spear fiercely pierced towards Qin Wentian's throat in a manner that was fast, accurate and decisive. The wind caused by the movements of the spear, surging with killing intent, slammed against Qin Wentian's body, but at this moment, Qin Wentian felt no sense of panic, only an eerie calm. Abruptly, as his eyes shined with Astral Light, he struck out with the spear in his hand, using the pointed tip of his spear to collide with that of his opponent.

"Bang." A terrifying surge of energy strongly vibrated the arms of his opponent, causing him to drop his spear with a clatter. But before the spear fell from the hands of his opponent, Qin Wentian's long spear, like a hot knife through butter, grinded against the side of his opponent's spear, which was still falling midway. Using the extra cushion as an added support, he angled his spear upwards and directly stabbed the spearhead into the

throat of his opponent. The warhorse Qin Wentian was riding on continued forward. Using a burst of strength, he directly shot the spear cleanly through his opponent's throat before catching hold of it again. The spearhead glistened with fresh blood, shining with a bizarre glow.

Somewhere in the distance, Ye Lang's sharp claws were deeply impaled into the head of a defender within Qin Wentian's line of sight. As he crushed the head with terrifying strength, the defender fell from his warhorse with his brains sliced apart and no hopes of surviving. Ye Lang's eyes were filled with a wild and unbridled aura as he stared at Qin Wentian in contempt. His lips slightly curled up unpleasantly as if he were provoking Qin Wentian into a duel.

"Next year, this day will be marked as the anniversary of the Qin Clan's extermination, and as for Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, they will be labeled as traitors to the country and executed in the Royal Capital with millions of eyes watching them," Ye Lang coldly stated, and as he did so, he pointed his finger to Qin Yao, who was battling with someone nearby. "And as for this woman, do not kill her. I want to enjoy her slowly tonight."

Qin Yao was distracted for a moment, and due to rage and humiliation, she was almost caught unaware by her opponent.

Qin Wentian coldly stared at Ye Lang as he turned his warhorse, rapidly galloping away.

"Escaping?" The corners of Ye Lang's mouth curled with disdain; today, they had prepared an inescapable net for the Qin Clan, and

since the younger members of the Qin Clan had chosen to come his way, how could he still let them leave with their lives?

Ye Lang sat astride his warhorse, frenziedly galloping after Qin Wentian. “No one is to interfere; his life is mine to take.”

As countless patrons of the inns lining both sides of the street were observing the battle, they felt shock in their hearts.

“The person just now was Qin Wentian from the Qin Clan, right? People called him a trash in the past, but to think that during the day of the examination, his true prowess shocked everyone, revealing his monstrous talent. His combat prowess should be extremely strong as well.”

“So what? The person chasing him is Ye Lang. Other than being a genius of the Ye Clan from the Royal Capital, he is also the disciple of Asura Wu. Qin Wentian has just embarked on a path of death.”

As the crowd discussed their thoughts, both Qin Wentian and Ye Lang had already galloped towards the other end of the street. This place was spacious and well suited for battle, and as long as one stood on a high vantage point, the whole street would be visible to them. At this moment, under the crowd’s astonished gazes, Qin Wentian halted his warhorse. He turned around and directly faced Ye Lang, who was galloping after him.

“Weng”. A buzzing sound rang out as Qin Wentian’s long spear appeared in his hands. Reining in his horse with a steely glint in his eye, he rush forward towards Ye Lang, who was madly

galloping towards him. His target was not Ye Lang, but rather the warhorse he was riding on! With the warhorse' speed and inertia, how could it manage to dodge Qin Wentian's spear strike at close quarters?

A wheezing sound akin to that of a speeding bullet rang out as Qin Wentian's long spear directly pierced through the head of the warhorse, culminating in the horse letting out a death cry. Ye Lang's body spun in the air as he leapt from the horse, his arms spreading like the wings of a bird while he lunged towards Qin Wentian. Although Ye Lang was still at the Body Refinement Realm, unable to soar through the skies, it was still possible to somewhat achieve a similar effect using explosive strength to aid him.

Moreover, Ye Lang's Astral Soul was condensed from the Demonic Wolf Constellation—the leaping power of wolves was already strong to begin with. The current Ye Lang, akin to a demonic wolf, lunged at Qin Wentian with his sharp claws extended, emitting waves of terrifying pressure and a chilling aura.

Unable to exert his full strength atop of his warhorse, Qin Wentian kicked the saddle as he somersaulted backwards. Ye Lang's claws descended through the air, impaling through the skull of the warhorse and killing it with a single strike. Ye Lang swiftly landed on the ground, directly facing against Qin Wentian.

Ye Lang licked some of the horse's blood that had splashed onto the corner of his lips. He stared at Qin Wentian, as if Qin Wentian were already a dead man.

“Normally, those at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm would possess a strength of 81 bulls. Ye Lang, in addition to being at the peak of the Body Refinement Realm, can actually generate an astounding strength level of over 100 bulls by combining the boosting effect from his Astral Soul and the attack techniques he employed.” Despite of this, Qin Wentian was incomparably calm. Since he had already managed to lure Ye Lang over here, there was no way he would still give Ye Lang a chance to survive.

Nine silvery needles appeared in Qin Wentian’s hands. Without hesitation, he accurately pierced the needles into nine acupuncture points on his own body. Instantly, he could feel his potential being endlessly drawn out. The feeling of boundless strength flooding his body was so invigorating that he involuntarily let out a low roar.

Qin Wentian was already fully proficient in the needle acupuncture techniques taught to him by Uncle Black, but he had never utilised this type of potential-igniting needle acupuncture technique before, as there would inevitably be some side effects after using it. However, he had no choice but to do so this time in order to kill the person standing in front him!

“What a pity, you won’t be alive to see the destruction of the Qin Clan as well as the scene of me fondling your sister, Qin Yao.” Ye Lang grinned evilly as he rushed forward, releasing his Demonic Wolf Astral Soul with no intention to show mercy. Ye Lang planned to use the most brutal and violent method he had at his disposal to kill Qin Wentian, showing no quarters at all.

The same went for Qin Wentian, who had confidence in his abilities. He had no intention to go easy on his opponent at all.

Seeing the rapidly approaching Ye Lang, Qin Wentian released his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul. That golden halo shone with blinding, resplendent light, causing spectators that were far off in the horizon to cry out in shock. This was a battle between Stellar Martial Cultivators!

“Buzz!” A cruel shadow emerged from Ye Lang’s body. To the spectators, it was as if they had seen a terrifying, black-colored demonic wolf lunging towards Qin Wentian with a speed so fast that it could be comparable to lightning, stealing the breath of the entire crowd.

The current Qin Wentian was calm, so calm to the point where it was eerie. His sharp intuition had already sensed the swift Ye Lang approaching him rapidly with a chilly burst of murderous aura so intense that it seemed almost capable of rending him to pieces. Qin Wentian moved slightly in spiral; once his body started to move, his astral soul flickered, and his arms, akin to the heavenly hammer, explosively burst forth, metamorphosing into the image of a terrifying dragon. The Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul seemed to resonate together with the moves of the Dragon Subduing Fist, interweaving together as one and emitting a fearsome pressure.

“Claws of the Heavenly Wolf!”

Ye Lang’s strikes contained immense explosive power, and the sharp claws were capable of slicing apart huge rocks and even small hills. How could a body made of flesh and blood be able to withstand that?

“Draconic Roar of the Nine Heavens!”

This was the second time that the two of them had clashed, both using their ultimate moves. A thunderous roar rang out as Qin Wentian felt his fist being lacerated, while Ye Lang felt a surge of power, containing extremely tyrannical energy, moving from his claws all the way to his arm. The vibration caused by the tyrannical energy was so great that it felt as though his arm would disintegrate any moment. Not only that, the energy even managed to enter his body.

“Boom!”

That tyrannical energy vibrated within Ye Lang’s body, and the impact caused him to soar through the air before landing heavily on the ground, spitting out a mouthful of fresh blood.

After his breakthrough, Qin Wentian had gained another level of strength. At the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm, normal cultivators would possess a strength level of 49 bulls. As for Qin Wentian, he condensed an Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer, in addition his innate technique—the Dragon Subduing Fist. Coupled with the fact that his potential was being continuously drawn out by his needle techniques, this strike of his contained an unimaginable amount of power that was far more terrifying than what anyone would have expected.

That strike of his exhausted only half of his total strength. Unlike in the past, he did not expend all of his power in this strike, since that would severely affect his combat ability. But even so, just a single strike containing half of his power was sufficient to

seriously injure Ye Lang.

After all, Ye Lang was similar to the vast majority of martial cultivators; before he condensed his Astral Soul, he had already absorbed huge amounts of Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi and trained as a Martial Cultivator. As a result, he simply could not be mentioned in the same breath as Qin Wentian, whether in regards to the perfection of his body or the boosting effect of his Astral Soul.

Evidently, Qin Wentian was not unaffected by this exchange. He was forced to retreat several steps before he could regain his bearings. But almost immediately after, Qin Wentian leaped forwards like a ferocious beast, sprinting madly in the direction of Ye Lang.

Ye Lang's face froze, his expression growing even colder. Immediately, he jumped up. Qin Wentian's extremely violent fist emitted a pressure as heavy as a huge mountain, causing even the agile Ye Lang to have no time to evade. Instead, Ye Lang could only choose to go head to head, clashing directly against Qin Wentian.

“Bang!” Abruptly, under the impact of the collision, Ye Lang was sent soaring through the air once more. This was the second time that he had been injured so seriously to the point where his Qi and blood surged uncontrollably about his body, causing him to continuously spit out blood. His face turned bloodlessly pale, but when he lifted his head, he only saw a pair of eyes that were filled with immense killing intent staring back at him. For the first time in his life, Ye Lang felt the shadow of death looming over him, causing his body to shake uncontrollably from fear. His heart went

cold..... so cold, so cold.

AGM 025 – Violence

Evidently, Ye Lang did not expect Qin Wentian's strength to become so terrifying in an instant. If he had, there would have been no way he would have chose to clash head-on with Qin Wentian. But once he made a mistake, regret was all but useless. Qin Wentian frenziedly rushed towards him once again.

“Buzz.” Ye Lang released his Astral Soul with a mad glint in his eyes. Ye Lang himself seemed to metamorphose into the shape of a gigantic demonic wolf, crouching on the ground with four limbs like a wild beast. He exerted all of his strength, seeking only to escape. Despite his grievous injuries, the speed at which he was still capable of mustering formed an afterimage, leaving the hearts of the spectators trembling in shock.

“Young Master.” Far off in the distance, the faces of the elites from the Ye Clan witnessing this scenario all felt their faces turn pale with fright. Especially Ye Lang's guardian, who was sprinting madly with haste to reach Ye Lang.

“Stop them.” Qin Chuan roared with rage as his body ferociously surged forward like a hunting leopard, knocking a man off his warhorse. At the same time, the arrows of a few of the defenders flew over, killing another man.

The earth was shaking with tremors. Qin Wentian continued on, chasing after Ye Lang with speed akin to that of a raging wind. The fact that his thin figure was actually capable of producing a speed that fast caused the spectators to tremble.

“How swift.” Only now did the members of the Qin Clan realise that the quiet youth who had lived with them for more than ten years had spent grueling effort each morning, running regardless of rain or shine.

During the time Qin Wentian was sprinting after Ye Lang, he had already recovered his spear from the warhorse’s corpse. His sharp eyes focused on a shadow in front him. Ye Lang was galloping on all fours as a bellow of rage roared from his mouth. Raising his spear, it was as if Qin Wentian had transferred all of his anger onto the shaft of the long spear, a spear that was countless times sharper, faster, and more ferocious than an arrow. It effortlessly sliced through the air as it flew for the kill towards Ye Lang.

“Be careful.” Ye Mo, who was standing ahead, shouted. Ye Lang could feel an impending sense of doom as he tucked his body and increased his speed even further.

“Sheee!”

A bestial howled filled with pain resounded through the air alongside a crisp sound of flesh being punctured. The spear, which was initially aimed for Ye Lang’s brain, missed and pierced through his legs instead. It dropped from the air, pinning Ye Lang’s legs to the ground.

A surge of cold air billowed past. In that short instance, Qin Wentian had already caught up to Ye Lang. Directly raising his foot, Qin Wentian stomped right on Ye Lang’s back. The impact caused the latter to violently spit out blood.

Time seemed to pause at this moment, even for those who were embroiled in battles against one another. Everyone turned their head, fixing their sight on Qin Wentian and Ye Lang.

They only saw an icy fire flashing through the eyes of the youth as he extracted the spear that was pinning Ye Lang on the ground, forcefully turning Ye Lang's body over. The terror of death could clearly be seen in Ye Lang's eyes. Never had he thought that he would die here today.

The members of the Ye Clan held their breath. If Ye Lang were to die here today, his protectors would be put to death.

"Qin Wentian, if you dare to pierce the spear downwards, the only thing that awaits you, will be hell on earth." Ye Mo gazed at Qin Wentian as his voice turned icy cold.

Raising his head, Qin Wentian glanced at Ye Mo with a sinister smile tinged with a slight bit of evil. He curled his lips, his eyes full of contempt.

His head lowered once again, he stared at Ye Lang, who was lying on the ground. "I said before that I would definitely kill you."

"If you dare touch me, a terrible death awaits you." Ye Lang's eyes were still filled with a bestial aura as he glared at Qin Wentian threateningly.

“Qin Wentian, if Ye Lang dies, there is no way that your Qin Clan would survive against the raging flames of my Ye Clan’s fury.” Ye Mo pressured at the side. Even at this point, they still had the gall to be arrogant.

“Remember this: Ye Lang will certainly not be the first.” Qin Wentian’s chilly voice rang out. Time seemed to stop as the spear in his hand violently pierced downwards. It pierced right into Ye Lang’s skull, pinning him to the ground, with fresh blood and brain matter leaking out. Despite his death, Ye Lang’s eyes were still wide-opened in shock, it was if he had not expected Qin Wentian to actually dare to pierce him with the spear.

With chests breathing heavily, the spectators were stunned. They finally understood that Qin Wentian had not been escaping, but rather luring Ye Lang to a battleground that could be used to his advantage.

“Well done,” Qin Ye bellowed. Qin Wentian’s spear strike was fast and decisive, much to Qin Ye’s liking.

“Come and kill me if you can, if I do not meet my death today, I will become the Ye Clan’s worst nightmare.” Qin Wentian pointed the tip of his spear in Ye Mo’s direction as he coldly stated. After doing so, he turned his body and began madly sprinting towards a distant alley.

Ye Mo’s body flickered, but as he began soaring through the air, the Yuanfu Realm defender moved to obstruct his path. Qin Wentian wanted to lure the people of the Ye Clan. making them chase after him so that the other members of the Qin Clan could

have a chance to escape. The defender understood this; however, he couldn't let Ye Mo, a cultivator at the terrifying Yuanfu Realm, to chase after Qin Wentian.

“I want the head of Qin Wentian!” Ye Mo angrily commanded. Upon hearing the command, the other members of the Ye Clan frantically chased after Qin Wentian. If they allowed Ye Lang's killer to escape, they would be the one to face the clan's wrath.

The shock in Bai Qingsong's heart did not dissipate even after a long time. The once gentle and smiling youth had actually displayed such battle prowess. Even his gaze was sufficient to cause fear in Bai Qingsong's heart. Deep in his heart, Bai Qingsong deeply regretted what has happened; however, that regret was swiftly buried by his cunning. The most important thing today was to destroy the Qin Clan and to kill Qin Wentian, giving no chance for them to revive.

Many members of the Ye Clan and the Bai Clan chased after Qin Wentian, causing the pressure faced by the other Qin members to lessen substantially. Taking this chance, Qin He quickly commanded, “Everyone, retreat towards the Star River Association.”

“But, what about Wentian?” Qin Yao asked, worry evident in her features.

“Do not waste the chance Wentian bought for us. I will find him. Qin Ye, I will leave things here to you.” Qin He instructed as he swiftly rushed towards Qin Wentian's direction.

Qin Ye's eyes reddened as he howled, "Go!"

When they finally arrived at the location where Qin Wentian was last seen, the people of the Ye Clan couldn't find a trace of him. Considering how familiar Qin Wentian was with the streets of the Sky Harmony City, how could he possibly proceed in a straight line, making it so easy for his pursuers?

"When coming across to a split path, split into two groups and continue chasing after him. If he is alive, I want to see him; if he is dead, I want to see his corpse." The pursuers split themselves into two groups, and continue the chase. If they stuck together as one, it was highly improbable for them to be able to find Qin Wentian, given that Qin Wentian was intentionally hiding himself away.

This particular street was one of the most luxurious streets in the Sky Harmony City. There was plenty of split paths that were unsuitable for horse riders. Thus, many of the riders had to dismount and continue their chase on foot.

Currently, Qin Wentian was hiding in an abandoned alley right at the end of the street. He withdrew a Yuan Meteor Stone and unceasingly absorbed the Astral Energy within. He had no time to take into consideration the fact that he should use the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique to refine the energy and aid in his breakthrough. In his mind, he only wanted to rapidly recover all the energy that he had exhausted earlier when he was fighting with Ye Lang.

“This way.” The sound of a voice drifted over, causing Qin Wentian’s body to grow tense. A moment later, the silhouettes of two figures moved past him, but almost immediately, they halted their steps as if they could sense his presence.

“Bzz!” Qin Wentian exploded forth in that instance like an arrow leaving an arched bow. As ferocious as hunting prey, he led his spear forward like a raging dragon. His spear arts contained the essence of the movements behind the Dragon Subduing Fist, making it incomparably domineering.

One person managed to turn just in time to see Qin Wentian’s long spear piercing his own throat with lightning-fast speed.

The other figure froze in shock, but the experienced opponent swiftly recovered as he retreated backwards, intending to lengthen the distance between him and Qin Wentian.

“Collapsing Tiger Fist.” that person roared in rage. Waves of terrifying pressure, equivalent to that of a ferocious tiger rending apart its prey, gushed forth as a fist filled with a wild, bestial aura sped frenziedly towards Qin Wentian.

“Innate strength. He is an opponent at the Arterial Circulation Realm.” Despite of this, Qin Wentian was still incomparably calm. In his eyes, there was only his opponent.

Although this person was not a Stellar Martial Cultivator, the might of the Arterial Circulation Realm was nothing to sneeze at. Cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm were able to unleash

innate strength, which enable them to send out energy blasts from a distance. They possessed an indomitable advantage that cultivators at the Body Refinement Realm were unable to match.

“Howl!” The might of the long spear was comparable to a dragon as it swepted outwards and clashed against the fist, causing lacerations to appear on the fist of Qin Wentian’s opponent. Qin Wentian’s strength, when paired with the boosting effect from the divine weapon, was already sufficient enough to reach the level of a normal cultivator at the Arterial Circulation Realm. After all, he was a Stellar Martial Cultivator. In addition, cultivators of the 1st level of the Arterial Circulation Realm had a limited pool of energy.

During this short span of time, Qin Wentian’s resolution further increased. He must kill the opponent, and he had to adopt a blitzkrieg strategy, ending the battle as fast as possible.

“What a domineering strength.” The opponent, seeing how Qin Wentian countered his innate strength, felt fear in his heart. No wonder Qin Wentian was able to kill Ye Lang. Retreating rapidly, he refused to engage Qin Wentian in close combat. Both of his arms explosively shot out, shooting forth waves of violent and brutal energy that threatened to overwhelm Qin Wentian.

Resplendent rays of Astral Light emerged as the shape of a Heavenly Hammer materialized in Qin Wentian’s left hand. Qin Wentian chopping furiously at his opponent, emitting waves of killing intent.

“Boom!” The energy blast from the fist dissipated, its intensity

diminished by the tyrannical strength of the Heavenly Hammer to something his body would be able to bear. With an incredibly sharp look in his eyes, Qin Wentian lurched forward.

“Die!” Immediately after, Qin Wentian gathered his strength as he shot his spear forward like a speeding arrow. His opponent madly defended, but Qin Wentian’s strike contained herculean strength. Like a hot knife through butter, the long spear shot forth with an irresistible force, directly piercing through the middle of his opponent’s brow. Just like that, an expert of the Arterial Circulation Realm had fallen.

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian sucked in a huge breath as he extracted his spear from his opponent’s corpse. Swiftly after, he disappeared into the alley and started sprinting towards the other direction. He was afraid that the commotion caused by the battle would attract more attention from the members of the Ye Clan.

The current Qin Wentian felt fatigue dragging down his steps. After all, his cultivation was only at the 7th level of the Body Refinement Realm. Continuously killing Ye Lang and two others, in addition to the strike he suffered earlier, was a huge drain on his strength. Not only that, when the effect of the potential igniting needle techniques disappeared, he would be even weaker than he was now. He had to arrive at a safer location before that happened.

AGM 026 – Reinforcement

Without any hesitation, Qin Wentian discarded the long spear he was wielding. A lone traveller wielding a long spear as his divine weapon? It was too eye-catching and would enable his pursuers to easily trace his movements by questioning the innocent bystanders.

Qin Wentian wouldn't let pride inflate his ego just because he'd managed to kill a cultivator of the Arterial Circulation Realm. After all, his opponent was just a Martial Cultivator and had a limited amount of energy. If the opponent he was facing was just slightly stronger than the one he'd killed earlier, there would have been no way for him to prevail. Even if he had the aid of the long spear, the ending would still be the same: death.

After discarding the spear, Qin Wentian purchased a robe from a random store in the street and hid his original layer of clothing underneath it. As Qin Wentian moved about in the streets, he would see his pursuers searching high and low for him. Acting nonchalantly as if he belonged there, Qin Wentian walked about in the streets openly, ducking into alleys when it was needed.

But Qin Wentian felt extremely depressed. He discovered that this region was already sealed by the men from the Ye Clan and the Bai Clan, and that his pursuers were growing in numbers — blockading all entrances. There were many times when he had to turn back halfway before he could be recognised. Escaping from this region was as tough as ascending to the Heavens.

“Blocking the entrances as well sending some men to scour the

streets. This way, it'll only be a matter of time before they find me." Qin Wentian was leaning against a thick wall at this moment as his hands nonchalantly fiddling about with the star-shaped object that Uncle Black had passed him. He had no idea what this object was for, but he knew that there was no way Uncle Black would give him a useless item.

At this moment, the sound of light footsteps could be heard approaching him. From the corner of his eyes, as he spotted a figure slowly walking in his direction, Qin Wentian's heart skipped a beat. Because Qin Wentian kept his head lowered, it invoked the suspicion of the person approaching, causing the person to shout, "Raise your head."

Qin Wentian did not heed the command, and as his opponent drew closer, his body tensed as spirals of astral energy gathered in his body.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian raised his head and moved to strike. A whistling sound spread through the air. He swept his spear out horizontally, preparing to slice through the throat of his opponent. At this moment, the face of his supposed opponent came into view.

(TL: I have no idea where he got the spear from. The author just said he discarded his spear earlier as it was too conspicuous)

"Second Uncle," Qin Wentian drew in a breath in shock. This person was Qin He, he hadn't expected Qin He to chase after him right after Qin Wentian had created the distraction.

"Live on." Qin He only spoke two words as he quickly retreated

out of the alley, wearing the same long robes as Qin Wentian and a conical-shaped bamboo hat, lowering his head. The weapon he used was also a long spear, and his long robes masked the difference in their heights. As long as no one observed his features clearly, there wouldn't be too much differences between him and Qin Wentian.

“Second Uncle” Qin Wentian exclaimed in a low voice as he realised what Qin He was going to do, only to hear the sounds of a collision outside the alley. It was as if Qin He had intentionally knocked something down in order to attract the attention of his pursuers.

“We've found him.”

“Over here!” The excited sounds of the pursuers drifted over, causing Qin Wentian's heart to tremble.

“Live on.” The sound of Qin He's voice resounded in his mind. Many thoughts surfaced in Qin Wentian's head. Once upon a time, Qin He had hated him, treated him coldly, and even wanted to expel him from the Qin Clan. But now, when it came to a situation of life and death, Qin He unhesitatingly walked out for the sake of saving him—leaving behind a heroic view of his back and two words.

Qin Wentian also thought of Bai Qingsong's hypocritical side. There were some who were pleasant looking on the outside—elegant and graceful in their behavior—but deep inside, their hearts contained an utterly despicable and vile character. There were others, however, who looked cold on the surface, but where

incomparably brave and valant when the situation called for it.

The men of the Qin Clan shed blood, not tears.

“I must live on.” Qin Wentian clenched his fist with only one thought in his mind: living on.

Turning his back, Qin Wentian chose a direction opposite from Qin He and continued on. Qin He had intentionally put himself in danger and might not survive — and it was all for the sake of giving Qin Wentian a faint hope of surviving. For the sake of Qin He’s sacrifice, Qin Wentian grit his teeth and swore that he would definitely escape from this place today.

Qin Wentian’s footsteps became faster and faster. Since Qin He had gone through the trouble of creating such a huge distraction while drawing all the pursuers away, Qin Wentian needed to make good use of this chance to escape before Qin He’s identity was revealed.

The anger in his heart, as well as his thirst for survival, transformed into motivation. Qin Wentian increased his speed and sped through the streets before finally reaching an entrance. There was actually no one guarding the entrance. With no traces of hesitation, Qin Wentian rushed forward, and ten breaths later, a high wall appeared to his side. This high wall separated the inner streets and the main streets from the outside.

At this moment, in front of Qin Wentian, a graceful silhouette lept up in the air, landing on the top of the high wall. The

silhouette belonged to a girl about 18 years of age. Her clothing wrapped around her body, fully displaying her contours, with a headful of black hair dancing in the wind. Her eyes shone with a luster as she discovered Qin Wentian, placing her hand into her mouth as she whistled, revealing an exceedingly mesmerizing smile on her face.

Qin Wentian didn't recognise this beautiful and bewitching lady in front of him, but from her gaze, it appeared that she knew of him. Since there wasn't an air of enmity being emitted from her, Qin Wentian increased his speed as he continued rushing forwards.

However, much to his surprise, he soon discovered that the lady was mirroring his movements. She was going in the same direction as him, albeit she was on the top of the high wall, while he was beneath it, on the streets.

"Haha, you found him?" A crisp voice rang out, and almost immediately, Qin Wentian saw the silhouette of another person leap through the air and land on the top of the high wall. The new arrival directed a glance at him.

"I, this little missy, personally led the search. Of course there would be no problems." The lady from earlier laughed. The two of them seemed to have no intention of conversing with Qin Wentian as they followed him down the streets, causing Qin Wentian to feel somewhat irritated in his heart. On the other side of the wall was the main street. The actions of the two clowns on the wall would surely attract the notice of others, and if this continued on, he would surely be exposed.

Increasing his speed yet again, Qin Wentian sped past a few other streets and alleys before finally arriving at the main road, preparing to make his way to the Star River Association to seek refuge.

The sounds of horses galloping rang out as clods of earth dislodged, creating layers of dust. Very quickly, Qin Wentian noticed a platoon of troops riding his way, and the person in the lead was none other than Ye Mo.

“Ye Mo.” Ye Mo’s appearance, as well as the presence of so many troops, caused Qin Wentian to turn pale. He was exposed. This time around, even if he had wings, he would still find it difficult to escape from here.

“I want him alive.” Ye Mo icily commanded, making no attempts to mask the killing intent in his eyes. Immediately, the shadows of two figures rushed forth with terrifying speed, causing Qin Wentian to slightly shudder. These two opponents were definitely at the Arterial Circulation Realm.

But, at the same moment, Qin Wentian had no time to react as a violent gust of wind blew past him, materializing into a shadowy silhouette that sped in the direction of the two cultivators of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Violet tremors shook the ground as the shadowy figure’s every step, left an extremely deep footprint in the ground, causing the hearts of the people to tremble.

“Puchi!” Time seemed to slow as a light sound rang out. Qin Wentian observed that the palms of that mysterious figure were comparable to sharp sabers and had directly pierced right into the hearts of the two cultivators. With a light exertion of strength, that person easily killed the two cultivators from the Ye Clan, slowly leaving their bodies to collapse onto the ground.

“How strong.” Qin Wentian’s countenance froze as he realised that the mysterious figure was none other than one of the two figures who’d been speeding along the top of the high wall earlier. And at that moment, lady from earlier appeared before him. Not only that, a bunch of figures, all appearing to be below 20 and emitting an unusual yet grand aura, appeared an instant later from all directions.

“Junior apprentice brother seems to be quite handsome.” The lady from before had hints of a charming smile present on her face and a fragrance about her that—in addition to her form-fitting clothes that further accentuated her well-endowed figure—made her as bewitching as a demoness. Her looks were on the same scale as that of the four great beauties in the Sky Harmony City, but she had one point that they lacked; she was incomparably seductive—capable of making any man feel a nefarious fire burning down in their loins.

“Junior apprentice brother?” Confusion clouded his features upon hearing the term that the lady had referred to him as.

However, he soon understood why after he saw Mustang.

This made the background of the youths clear: they were all members of the Emperor Star Academy.

“I don’t believe that this is the Emperor Star Academy’s intention—is it?” Ye Mo calmly spoke. The Emperor Star Academy should’ve already had nothing to do with this matter. Mustang and the rest had no business here.

“This is my, Mustang’s, idea. It has nothing to do with the Emperor Star Academy.” Mustang replied just as calmly. The truth was what Ye Mo had guessed; because of the Royal Clan, as well as the indirect pressure caused by the complicated webs of economic affairs, Mustang’s request for the Emperor Star Academy to send help was overruled. And thus, without any other choice, Mustang and his allies had to come to the Sky Harmony City alone.

As for what the actual reason behind the rejection was, Mustang had no idea. However, he truly liked this youth, Qin Wentian. Be it personality or talent, Mustang had no complaints. As such, he wanted to protect Qin Wentian. Roping in all his students and rushing through the night — eventually, they witnessed that earlier scenario.

“Since it’s as I have guessed, I have no more worries.”

Ye Mo coldly replied as he waved his hands. Almost immediately, the soldiers under his control encircled Qin Wentian and the rest. Although the combat ability of the Emperor Star Academy was overwhelming, Ye Mo held an absolute advantage in terms of numbers. Since Mustang and his students wanted to interfere in this matter, they would all be buried here today.

AGM 027 – The Treacherous Human Heart

The sound of warhorses galloping filled the air as they rushed forward in the direction of Qin Wentian and the students from Emperor Star Academy. Ye Mo was motionless, his eyes fixated on Mustang. Since Mustang's interference was just a personal decision, there was no need to be polite to him.

Qin Wentian contemplated his surroundings. Ye Mo's men were still increasing in number, while there were only slightly more than ten students from the Emperor Star Academy. It seemed that this battle would not be easily won.

“Mountain.” The bewitching lady next to Qin Wentian called out, and abruptly, the shadow of a tall and sturdy figure sprinted forward, releasing his Astral Souls. Atop his forehead, the shadows of two Astral Souls materialized. The first was that of a demonic ape, emitting a fearsome and domineering killing intent. It was as if the manifestation was truly alive; the second manifestation was that of a stoneman.

“This combination of Astral Souls will grant him an exceedingly strong defense.” Qin Wentian's pupils contracted; the Demonic Ape Astral Sou, and the Stoneman Astral Soul were obviously condensed on the basis of forming an unbreakable defense. Not only that, the attack power they granted was not to be belittled either. The majority of cultivators would carefully consider the combined effects of their Astral Souls.

“Tremor.” The youth who was named “Mountain” forcefully smashed his fists upon the ground, and abruptly, a terrifying surge

flowed towards the platoon of soldiers, causing explosions to appear madly within the ground. These explosions created huge potholes, which made the horrified warhorses cry out in fear.

However, there was still a rider who wasn't caught in the tremors caused by the mini-earthquake. The rider masterfully steered his warhorse and dashed towards Mountain from the side, only to see that Mountain's feet were stomped deep into the ground. His body stood tall and erect, akin to a real mountain.

A long spear whistled as it pierced through the air, aimed for Mountain's head. However, showing no signs of panic, Mountain grabbed the spear with both his hands as his body forcefully collided with the warhorse. That terrifying impact was incapable of moving his body even the slightest bit.

"Indeed, what a terrifying defense." Qin Wentian exclaimed in his heart as he saw that Mountain had smashed both the spear and the wielder onto the ground. Blood spurted all about, causing the terrified warhorse to run away in a frenzy. This ignited confusion within the ranks of soldiers assembled nearby, giving the impression that he alone could hold out against 10,000 men.

Battle erupted in the other directions as well. Qin Wentian saw that there was a person who condensed two sword-type Astral Souls, integrating both as one into his body and emitting a terrifying sword Qi. Wherever he passed, fresh blood adorned the skies like a shower of rain.

All of them were cultivators who had opened two Astral Gates and belonged to the Arterial Circulation Realm. The Emperor Star

Academy truly accepted only geniuses amongst geniuses.

However, Ye Mo held an absolute advantage in numbers, and, regardless of everything else, there were still some fish that had escaped the net. They galloped in Qin Wentian's direction, only to find the bewitching female beside him smile lightly as her palms ferociously struck outward. Qin Wentian only saw the flash of a whip's shadow before the figures atop the warhorses were instantly whipped into the air. They were dead before they fell to the ground. That whip was as sharp as a sword—just a single strike was sufficient enough to kill.

“Junior apprentice brother, you need to leave.” The arms of the female coiled around the Qin Wentian's neck. As the distance between the enchanting visage of the bewitching lady and Qin Wentian shortened to only half a step, his heart palpitated wildly. He silently cursed that this bewitching woman was truly a demoness.

“Go on. With you here, it will only affect us when we enter combat.” Luo Huan continued. Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head; he knew that with his current strength, he could only be considered a burden.

“Go.” Qin Wentian decisively chose a direction with less enemies and proceeded onwards.

“Elder sister will protect you.” Luo Huan's figure followed as she brandished her whip, instantly creating a path of death through the soldiers clustered in the direction that Qin Wentian had chosen.

“Yu Fei, bring up the rear.”

“Right.” The sword-wielding youth lept through the air, landing behind Luo Huan. A few rays of sword light swept forth, decimating their pursuers.

Qin Wentian sprinted madly away, not even bothering to turn his head to witness the battlefield. After seeing the strength possessed by the Emperor Star Academy’s students, he felt that he was truly insignificant. Regardless of him attempting to compare himself to Mountain or Yu Fei, as long as they entered combat, they would easily be able to slaughter their opponents no matter how many Body Refinement Cultivators they were pitted against. Only those at the Arterial Circulation Realm would possess the qualifications to clash against them.

“Junior apprentice brother, where are we going?” Luo Huan closely followed Qin Wentian’s side, as if she was strolling idly by the courtyard. No hints of exertions were visible as she easily matched Qin Wentian’s pace.

“Elder Mustang and the rest of the respective seniors, are they sufficient to deal with the enemies?” Qin Wentian asked.

“No. Among us, other than teacher Mustang who is at the Yuanfu Realm, the strongest is only at the 7th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Our opponent, Ye Mo, other than being a Yuanfu Realm cultivator, still has plenty of Arterial Circulation exponents under him. And those aren’t the extent of his strength!

As long as one more Yuanfu Realm cultivator makes an appearance, the situation will quickly deteriorate for our side. Once that happens, the members of our Emperor Star Academy will prioritise fleeing.”

Although Luo Huan was matching the pace set by the madly sprinting Qin Wentian, her words were still extremely clear. She fully understood how terrifying Yuan Fu realm cultivators were and knew that without a doubt, as long as even one more appeared, her apprentice brothers would have no choice but to flee regardless of how strong they were. They must do so at their fastest speed.

Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head as he stated, “Thank you.”

Evidently, these people had appeared in Sky Harmony City for the sake of saving him, bearing huge risks on their part.

Luo Huan laughed, as she questioned, “So where are we going?”

“Star River Association.” Qin Wentian replied, causing Luo Huan’s expression to undergo a change. She asked again, “You joined the Star River Association?”

“No, but I’m acquainted with a grandmaster weaponsmith in the Star River Association, and he promised me that we would be able to find refuge there,” Qin Wentian replied.

As if she were pondering something, Luo Huan’s expression flickered before she replied, “Is it possible for us not go there?”

Qin Wentian, astonished by her reply, cast a glance at Luo Huan before saying, “The rest of my family members might be there, and furthermore, since Sky Harmony City is sealed, the Star River Association is the only safe place left where we can seek refuge.”

Luo Huan ceased the conversation and continued following beside Qin Wentian, sprinting in the direction of the Star River Association with no indication of taking a rest. Once Qin Wentian reached the Star River Association, the effects of the potential-igniting needle technique dissipated. All the fatigue from earlier invaded and assailed his body, causing Qin Wentian to wish that he could just faint and seek comfort from the darkness—but at this moment, he couldn’t do so.

Within the Star River Association, both Qin Ye, Qin Yao, and the rest had arrived, but when compared to before, only half of their numbers were left. Most of the deaths had been caused by the defenders sacrificing themselves, losing their lives in exchange for the safe passage of the Qin Clan members. Although they’d managed to survive, their bodies were riddled with injuries.

“Wentian.” Qin Ye and the rest immediately hurried over upon seeing Qin Wentian enter the Star River Association.

“Do you have news about your second uncle?” Qin Ye asked.

Qin Wentian froze as he shook his head, causing Qin Ye and Qing Shang’s faces to grow pale.

“Seems like my predictions were accurate, the Qin Residence was indeed destroyed.” From the side, a sarcastic voice in a high-pitched tone, drifted over.

Lin Yue was here today for the collection of her divine weapon, and seeing the sorry state the Qin Clan members were in, she couldn't help but add salt to their injuries.

The sounds of footsteps rang out. Step by step, Qin Wentian walked slowly towards Lin Yue with a cold look in his eyes that emitted the sharpness of a sword. Lin Yue's face stiffened as she asked, “Your clan's annihilation wasn't caused by me, so why are you taking out your anger on me?”

“Scram.” Qin Wentian spat out a word, causing Lin Yue to be dumbstruck. Scram? This stray dog from a defeated clan actually dared to ask her to scram? In spite of her annoyance, however, the pressure that Qin Wentian was currently exerting was capable of causing her heart to tremble in panic.

“Grandmaster Francis.” At that moment, Francis had arrived. Lin Yue revealed an expression of joy on her face as she ran towards him.

“Get lost.” Before Lin Yue had even reached Francis' side, she heard Francis's cold voice ring out. Lin Yue halted mid-step, her face pale.

Extremely displeased, Francis was currently in a terrible mood and had no time to bother with Lin Yue. Ignoring her, he directly

approached Qin Wentian and expressed his welcome, “Young Master Wentian, you have arrived.”

“Grandmaster Murin has entered closed-door seclusion to craft and refine weapons. He will be out shortly. Please, all of you, follow me to the grand hall for a rest.” Francis was extremely courteous, causing Lin Yue’s pupils to widen in shock as she stood at the side. Qin Wentian and the rest politely nodded their heads in agreement. They went to the side to take a rest, yet the atmosphere within remained extremely heavy. None of them had any idea regarding what had happened to Qin Chuan and the others who were still fighting at the Qin Residence.

“Why are you still here? Scram. Don’t look for me here in the future.” Francis ignored the look of humiliation in Lin Yue’s eyes as he harshly spoke.

Many in the Star River Association stared at the members of the Qin Clan while sighing in their hearts. The once impressive Qin Clan, capable of commanding the winds and clouds, was now crumbling. They were hanging on by a thread in their darkest hours.

Time flitted past, and yet Murin had not emerged. The thunderous sounds of horses galloping rang out from the outside as a platoon of soldiers stopped within 100 metres of the Star River Association. Ye Mo and his soldiers had arrived, and after dismounting, they reached the entrance of the Star River Association, coming face to face with the members of the Qin Clan. As their eyes met, a surge of terrifying pressure permeated the atmosphere.

Relentless sounds of horses galloping resound through the air. All the men under Ye Mo, including Asura Wu himself, had arrived.

The members of Qin Clan all felt a heavy feeling weighing down in their hearts.

“Everyone, sorry for the wait.” At this moment, a clear and straightforward voice sounded out. Murin, one of the division leaders of the Star River Association had arrived, accompanied by that arrogant lady who was always by his side.

“Qin Wentian, have you come to a decision about my past proposal?” Murin smiled as he asked with a gentle expression, causing people to feel comfortable and relaxed around him.

“Proposal?” Qin Wentian froze.

“The matter about joining our Star River Association and becoming my disciple.”

“Grandmaster Murin, I thought you said that we would be the guests of the Star River Association?” A lack of comprehension appeared on Qin Wentian’s face.

“No, no..... the Chairman has spoken. He decided not to accept guests. It would still be better for you to consider my previous proposal.” Murin continued smiling as he explained.

The eyes of Luo Huan, who was standing beside Qin Wentian, narrowed to slits. Only now did she roughly understand the situation. Moving her mouth close to Qin Wentian's ears, she whispered, "Do you have something they want in your hands? With the status of a guest, they don't have binding power over you, but once you've joined the Star River Association, you will have to do what they say."

Qin Wentian wasn't stupid, and neither were the members of the Qin Clan. At this moment, their hearts went cold when they saw the gentle smile on Murin's face. That smile was like a poisonous snake, causing people to be terrified.

It was very obvious that Murin had intentionally delayed the time he appeared, waiting for Ye Mo's soldiers to arrive and force the members of the Qin Clan into desperation. Once he walked out, they were left with no choice but to submit to his demands.

"What a crafty fellow." Francis silently admonished in his heart, his eyes filled with the flames of anger. He had already thought he wasn't a good man, but when he was compared to Murin, they were still worlds apart. He felt that he himself was too "naive". As to why he was in a terrible mood, it was because the 2nd level divine imprint Qin Wentian had given him had been "borrowed" by Murin. When he asked Murin to return the divine imprint today, Murin had refused, causing Francis to suffer humiliation.

AGM 028 – Summoning of War Beast

The eyes of Qin Wentian were fixated on the “gentle” smile of Murin, as he asked, “What happens if I disagree?”

“Oh, you had better agree.” Murin hadn’t replied — the one who’d replied was the lady by his side, her gaze filled with arrogance and pride, as she looked down on the members of the Qin Clan while she continued, “Grandmaster Murin is a second-level weaponsmith, and just a small distance away from being a third-level. Given the position of your Qin Clan currently, he is showing kindness to you, and it would be your honour to accept. Do you understand?”

“Qin Wentian, this is a chance for you.” The elder from the Star River Association added. At this moment, Qin Wentian could clearly feel the haughtiness and arrogance emitted from the three of them. Pride had seeped deep into their bones, and they didn’t even care about his opinion, or that of the Qin members. If it wasn’t for Qin Wentian possessing a few perfectly drawn inscriptions of 2nd-level divine imprints, these people would never have even bothered to speak with him..

And as for Murin, as long as he said a word, he could immediately sentence the members of the Qin Clan into the abyss.

“Since this was going to be the answer, why did you still ask us to seek out the Star Association for refuge?” Qin Ye’s tone of voice was chilly, as he was incomparably angry. If it weren’t for the promise of Murin to Qin Wentian, the members of the Qin Clan wouldn’t have rested all their hopes on the Star River Association.

Murin indifferently swept his gaze towards Qin Ye as he coldly replied, “Even if Qin Wentian agreed to my proposal, you wouldn’t be under the protection of my Star River Association.”

“Despicable. I, your father, have no need for your protection.” Qin Ye bellowed with rage, and his fist thundered out, displacing the air comparable to the roar of a tiger, towards the Murin.

A look as sharp as a sword flickered in Murin’s eyes. Flicking out a single finger, immediately a thunderous sound rang out as Qin Ye only felt a terrifying pressure. The manifestation of a fire ember lion savagely dashed over, before his body was flung into the air.

“This is the Star River Association. I don’t wish to kill you, but there will not be a next time.” Murin’s expression remained calm as he spoke. A cultivator of the Yuanfu Realm compared to a cultivator of the Arterial Circulation Realm – the disparity was too wide. Even though Qin Ye was a cultivator of the 8th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, in front of Murin, he wasn’t able to last a single strike.

The members of the Qin Clan all had furious and angered looks on their faces, however, the Star River Association, wasn’t someone that they could afford to provoke. This feeling, this humiliation, was extremely painful to bear.

“What is your decision?” Murin asked as he looked towards Qin Wentian. As long as Qin Wentian agreed, not only would he be able to survive, he would become a member of the Star River Association. From all aspects, only an idiot would choose to refuse.

Qin Wentian turned his gaze towards Qin Yao and the rest.

“Wentian, the Qin Clan has no cowards.” Qin Yao coldly stated.

“The Qin Clan has no cowards” The members of the Qin Clan echoed. Even in death, they would not suffer such humiliation.

“The humiliation today... if I don’t die, I will forever engrave this moment in my heart.” Qin Wentian glanced at Murin, as he turned his body away, and walked towards the exit of the Star River Association. If it wasn’t for Murin who’d baited them with the promise of safety, and lured them into the Star River Association, then the Qin Clan today wouldn’t be in such a desperate situation.

The members of the Qin Clan followed behind Qin Wentian, as they cast infuriated gazes onto Murin.

“Open a path for them, let them out. Don’t drag your personal battles into my Star River Association.” A chilling, ice-cold aura was emitted from Muring when he closed his eyes, as he addressed Ye Mo and the rest who were standing outside the exit.

Ye Mo and the rest retreated, opening a path, and allowed the members of the Qin Clan to walk out. Now, the lives and fate of the members of the Qin Clan, lay in his hands.

Qin Wentian and the rest stepped out of the Star River Association, into an expansive public square, with all the entrances

sealed. There was no way they would be able to escape today.

“During the journey here, you asked me if it was possible for us not to come. Had you already guessed the ending?” Qin Wentian asked in a low tone, gazing at Luo Huan who was standing beside him.

“The Star River Association has always been stand alone, and would not interfere excessively with matters of the other powers. However, they possess a terrifying level of strength. The members of the Star River Association all place an emphasis on pragmatism, and I was worried that what you offered to them, wouldn’t be able to match up to what the Ye Clan was offering. However it seems that I was wrong; they wanted to call you to their side instead, but you rejected them.”

The calm voice of Luo Huan, caused Qin Wentian to feel a burst of coldness instead.

“If that’s the case, I’m afraid that before this, they’d already contacted the Ye Clan.” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, as he tightly clenched his fist. Murin made his arrival only after the members of the Ye Clan had arrived, while asking if he had agreed to the proposal earlier. If he agreed, he would have been entirely within Murin’s control, and if he disagreed, Murin would just send them to the abyss with a single word — how cold, how ruthless.

Turning his head back, he cast a glance back at Murin. Coincidentally, at this moment, Murin and the lady beside him were standing beside him on the stage. They were also looking towards him. Their gazes were filled with disdain, as if they were

mocking his stupidity.

The soldiers in front of them had all already been deployed into their formations, while pointing their spears towards Qin Wentian and the rest, as they released a heavy killing intent into the air.

The people on both the left and right of the them, began to stride forward as well.

In the direction of the Star River Association, both Asura Wu and Ye Mo, the two Yuanfu Realm Cultivators, were assuming command of the soldiers.

“The Heavens want my Qin Clan to perish.” Qin Ye howled, filled with unwillingness. The members of the Qin Clan’s had dejected looks on their face. There was no way for them to escape from this situation, only death awaited.

Far off in the distance, countless pairs of eyes glanced over, while silently sighing in their hearts. The Qin Clan, from today onwards, would become nothing but a remnant of history.

Luo Huan glanced up at the air. In a certain direction, there was a black eagle spiraling about, soaring in the sky. If the Qin Clan really had to fall today, the Emperor Star Academy would have no choice but to forcefully bring along Qin Wentian, and retreat.

The hands of Qin Wentian were tightly wrapped around the star-shape item that Uncle Black had given to him, and the excess

Astral Energy in his body, were slowly being infused into it. At this moment, Ye Mo waved his hands, indicating that a massacre was about to occur, causing looks of determination to appear on the faces of the members of the Qin Clan. Now, they could only go all out, and hope against all hope, while fighting for their survival.

But in this instance, an explosive resplendent radiance abruptly burst forth from the body of Qin Wentian.

“Argh.....” a voice filled with agony screamed, only for the spectators to see that star-shaped object was releasing a surge of terrifying strength, which seemed to be corroding the arms of Qin Wentian. As the spectators suddenly discovered, to their amazement, that the level of corrosion seemed to have completed, and that the entirety of Qin Wentian’s arm was fully submerged.

A incomparably thick and sturdy arm, akin to that of demonic beasts, had appeared.

This bizarre sight caused everyone to be stunned. Very quickly, the body of Qin Wentian was nibbled away by the corrosion. It was as if the crowd could see the form of a demonic beast materializing, threatening to devour Qin Wentian.

“Wentian, quickly, release it!” Qin Ye looked at the star-shaped object in Qin Wentian’s hands and quickly shouted out. However, the Qin Wentian right now felt that his body was filled with boundless strength. How could he release it?

In an instant, the entirety of Qin Wentian’s body was fully

submerged by the corrosion, while a gigantic demonic ape, filled with a bestial and tyrannical aura, seemed to materialized out of nowhere. Wentian's body was faintly discernable, transforming into a shadow within the body of the summoned creature.

Heavy, but filled with inexhaustible energy, this was what Qin Wentian was feeling now. He was clearly able to feel the power this huge form contained, but, the current him, was already an arrow at the end of the flight, a spent force, it was hard for him to be able to bear this burden. However, Qin Wentian had no choice but to clench his teeth firmly and persevered on.

“Boom.” Qin Wentian took a single step forward with much difficulty, causing the ground to shake violently. The power of that step stunned the crowd, as well as the members of the Qin Clan. The sudden change caught them all unaware.

“Boom, boom.....” The gigantic demonic ape abruptly started galloping, and that incomparably huge palm slammed down directly onto a group of soldiers, causing shrieks of terror everywhere.

That might of that palm, created a deafening sound as it slammed through the air, splitting apart the earth, while blood erupted, as the once living humans were smashed to death beneath the might of the palm. The power of a single palm was comparable to the heavy pressure emitted by Mount Tai.

Moving forward, the demonic ape extended it's hand as the shape of a Heavenly Hammer coalesced, abruptly exploding into motion, causing flesh to explode and blood to paint the skies red as a total

of 4-5 people were instantly killed, becoming mincemeat.

The scene of brutal carnage, caused the hearts of the members of Qin Clan to palpitate wildly, only to see that the body of demonic ape, at this moment, was wielding the hammer in an intricate dance, as it executed a particular set of hammer arts – The Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Art.

Qin Wentian didn't have much energy in his body left to sustain this heavy burden. He could only squeeze all his energy out, using this particular hammer technique to continue breaking through his previous limit, decimating all his enemies.

The places where the demonic ape had passed were all emptied of life, causing the men of Ye Mo starting to panic. The Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators tried frantically to escape, as none of them were able to withstand a single strike from the demonic ape.

Far off in the distance, as Mustang and the rest of the members of the Star Emperor Academy rushed over, they couldn't help but be thunderstruck by the sight of Qin Wentian's shadow in the body of the demonic ape

“Could this be..... a war beast summoned by a summoning constellation?” Mustang was trembling in his heart. How was this possible, Qin Wentian was only at the Body Refinement Realm, and had only a single Astral Soul. Where did this demonic ape come from? And according to the knowledge of Mustang, in the whole of Chu Country, there was no one capable enough to condense an Astral Soul from the Summoning Constellation. This exceeded his field of comprehension.

“KILL!” At this moment, Qin Ye rushed forward, causing the sluggish expressions on the faces of the Qin Clan members to vanish as they awoke, and started to attack the soldiers surrounding them.

“This burden isn’t something that his body will be able to sustain for long, let’s help out.” Mustang, with the force of a hurricane, dashed forth, as members of the Emperor Star Academy joined the fray.

As the demonic ape decimated the soldiers in it’s path, very quickly, it arrived in front of Ye Mo and Asura Wu, causing their pupils to contract as they both released their Astral Souls.

Wielding the Heavenly Hammer with unmatched strength, the demonic ape swiped the Heavenly Hammer towards Ye Mo. Ye Mo gathered the entirety of the Astral Energy in his body, and like a northern goshawk swooping down on it’s prey, his palms struck out, transforming into a mountain peak. It explosively smashing downwards, capable of smashing through any fortifications, in the direction of the huge hammer.

“Boom!” The mountain peak disintegrated, as Ye Mo was launched into the air. The impact caused the body of Ye Mo to be thrown right into the Star River Association.

“Stronger than even Ye Mo, who’s a Yuanfu Realm Cultivator.” The expressions of the crowd wavered, only to see the demonic ape dash forward, in the direction of Ye Mo. Feathered wings grew on

the back of Ye Mo, as he soared in the air, only to see the demonic ape stomp fiercely onto the ground, causing huge tremors as the whole building of the Star River Association shook, before launching its body into the air, wielding the Heavenly Hammer, as it explosively struck out.

“Rumble!” The body of Ye Mo was smashed right into the ground, as his countenance paled. The body of the demonic ape landed on the ground shortly after, half-kneeling, as if it had no more strength to stand up.

“DIE!” a human-sounding voice emanated forth from the throat of the demonic ape — this was the voice of Qin Wentian — only for the spectators to see the demonic ape standing up, it’s eyes filled with violent fury and killing intent, as it strode towards Ye Mo.

His face devoid of blood, Ye Mo looked at the gigantic silhouette in front of him, as he stated. “Qin Wentian, if you dare to kill me, both Qin Wu and Qin Chuan will be buried with me.”

“Rumble.”

Even before the sound of his voice faded, the Heavenly Hammer had already smashed down, before transforming back into Astral Light and vanishing into nothingness. Ye Mo was smashed beyond recognition, as his body was mangled into a pile of mincemeat and blood.

The heavy steps of the demonic ape, strode towards the exit of the Star River Association, causing the gaze of everyone in the

crowd to be riveted on it.

“ROAR.” A howl filled with fury frightened Asura Wu so much that he fled, soaring through the skies, as his expression turned unsightly. The others — upon seeing the death of Ye Mo and the escape of Asura Wu — had no more will to do battle, broke ranks, and escaped.

Initially, Qin Ye and the rest had wanted to chase after the soldiers, but Qin Wentian, who had exhausted the last vestige of his strength, collapsed onto the ground as he came out from the body of the demonic ape.

“Wentian.” Qin Yao cried out in worry, as she sprinted madly towards Qin Wentian, while at this moment, the demonic ape turned its head, looking at the body of Qin Wentian as its expression flickered, and under the fearful watch of Qin Yao, the gigantic ape squatted over, carrying the unconscious Qin Wentian, as a kind smile broke out on its visage. The eyes of the demonic ape were filled with traces of love and gentleness.

AGM 029 – Bai Qing’s Talent

The hand that Qin Yao extended to Qin Wentian froze in mid-air as she looked at the demonic ape carrying Qin Wentian. She had a sense of surrealism, almost like she was in a dream.

This demonic ape doesn’t seem to be a true demonic beast; if it was, there would have been no way for Qin Wentian to merge his body with it. However, the expression that it was currently exhibiting through its eyes was so human, so real.

“Roar.” The demonic ape howled as it turned its back and galloped away. Every step it took shook the ground and caused a thunderous sound to ring out. Its body leaped into the air, and as it landed on to the ground once more, there were cracks within a 100 meters of its landing. The momentum of that gigantic body was not delayed even slightly, and it continued leaping into the air. Swiftly, its figure blurred into a show while the thunderous sounds of its landing continued to echo throughout Sky Harmony City

“How is this possible? Summoning a War Beast? How is it possible that it would appear at Qin Wentian’s side? If that was not a summoning, then what was it?” Murin had seen many things and had extraordinary experiences, but even he had no idea about the origins of that demonic ape from earlier.

Qin Yao’s figure dashed behind the demonic ape, but she was stopped by Qin Ye. Currently, the Ye Clan was in full retreat, but Sky Harmony City was still under their control. If Qin Yao were to chase after Qin Wentian, it would be too dangerous.

However, their crisis was averted, albeit only temporarily.

Qin Ye cast a side glance at Murin, as he coldly stated, “My Qin Clan will remember today’s actions clearly in our hearts.”

Murin indifferently swept his gaze over to Qin Ye without even giving a damn; the haughty look in his eyes clearly expressed disdain. Putting Qin Ye beneath his notice, he replied, “Lady Luck seems to be smiling on you today. If you ever want to find me, come to the Star River Association in the Royal Capital.”

After he finished speaking, Murin and the rest returned to the Star River Association without waiting for Qin Ye’s reply. In the eyes of a revered weaponsmith such as himself, the Qin Clan was merely a clan that has fallen to ruins and was about to fade away.

Qin Ye brought the members of the Qin Clan along as they opted to leave together with the members of the Emperor Star Academy. The spectators, who had been viewing from afar, still had a dazed look on their faces. Very quickly, rumors started to spread to all corners of the Sky Harmony City—Qin Wentian transformed into a monstrous demonic ape and killed Ye Mo, whose cultivation was at the Yuanfu Realm. Currently, Qin Wentian was an extremely hot topic amongst the citizens of Sky Harmony City, as his exploits were discussed by countless people.

At the very same day, another shocking event of the same magnitude occurred: from Chu Country’s northwestern direction, there was a legion of troops who arrived and destroyed the seal from the Sky Harmony City before rushing towards the Qin Residence. Rumor had it that these troops were the guards stationed at the northwestern region of Chu Country. In the past,

their general was a battle commander under Qin Wu. After hearing the news of the Ye Clan leading their troops over to seal Sky Harmony City, they had rushed throughout the night in order to reach the city in time

The situation and power balance of the Sky Harmony City once again underwent a drastic change. The Qin Clan regained their former authority, Asura Wu fled in defeat, and the Bai Clan decided to relocate, preparing to move to the Royal Capital.

Bai Clan...Bai Qingsong seemed to have aged drastically from the time Autumn Snow condensed her Astral Soul, which caused him to be in high spirits, to the encounter with Qin Wentian, who suddenly revealed his power. Now, even his little daughter refused to heed his words.

“I will not leave with you.” Bai Qing calmly looked at her father as she spoke, However her words were now much colder, lacking their previous affection. During the past few days, she had been imprisoned by Bai Qingsong.

“Impudent! what happened to your filial piety?” Bai Qingsong was outraged.

“Filial piety? Daddy, you still remembered that it was you who had taught me filial piety. You were the one who also taught me benevolence and righteousness, but look at what you’ve done! Hypocrite! Repaying gratitude with enmity, almost causing the death of Wentian gege.” Bai Qing’s eyes were slightly wet; she hated her father immensely, realizing that every thought she had of her father was a facade. Bai Qingsong truly was a hypocrite.”

(TL: “gege” means older brother)

The psychological impact of personally witnessing her father betray his own beliefs was extremely cruel for a 15 year-old girl who had always thought of her father as her idol and had firmly believed in his kindness.

“Wentian gege? I’m your father! As for benevolence and righteousness, it is only possible if there are benefits to pave the way. Everything I do, I do it for the Bai Clan, for both of you sisters.” The look in Bai Qingsong’s eyes went cold. “Why can’t you be more like your elder sister.”

“Be like sister and keep a false pretence? She was so good that even I was fooled. I never thought she would be so evil, even when Wentian gege was so good to her.” Bai Qing coldly laughed.

“Stop being unreasonable. It seems like after all these years, I have raised and fed you for nothing. No wonder your sister is so talented and yet you can’t even cultivate.” Bai Qingsong was immensely disappointed.

“Talent, do you mean this?” Bai Qing continue laughing coldly, and abruptly, resplendent astral light shone brilliantly, lighting up the darkness and causing Bai Qingsong to freeze.

A faint shadow of an Astral Soul appeared atop Bai Qing’s forehead. This Astral Soul emitted extreme Yin energy and seemed to be a spirit from the netherworld, while the halo around it shined with a pure golden color.

A pure gold Astral Soul. Its origin was definitely the 4th Heavenly Layer or higher.

“Rumble.” Bai Qingsong felt that his brain was shaken, suffering from a concussion as he gaped. The 4th Heavenly Layer, Bai Qing’s first Astral Soul was condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer! This discovery caused Bai Qingsong to be thunderstruck.

He saw the Astral Soul being slowly retracted back into Bai Qing’s body, and instantly, Bai Qing seemed to transform into a nether spirit, emitting an exceedingly chilling Yin energy that made Bai Qingsong shiver involuntarily.

“Excellent! you are my daughter indeed, but the Astral Soul you condensed, why did you pick a Yin constellation?” Bai Qingsong continued to shiver.

“I’m not unable to cultivate. I just listened to Wentian gege, who instructed me not to absorb the Yuan Qi from Heavens and Earth so that I could increase my affinity to sense the Astral Constellations. Not only that, he taught me the art of meditation, so I was able to do what Elder Sister did and sensed the Constellations originating from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Because of my disappointment towards you, I continued pushing my senses upwards. I had already stopped caring about life and death, and even if I died, I still had to continue upwards. My intention and will were supported by my emotions, and when I finally managed to sense the constellations in the 4th Heavenly Layer, I was no longer conscious. It was not I who selected this Constellation, but rather, it was the Constellation that had chosen me.”

“Although Wentian gege and I have no blood relations, his kindness taught me how to be happy and maintain a positive outlook. His smile was so clean and pure. But you, as my father, taught me hypocrisy, betrayal, emotionless, and cold-bloodedness. What qualifications do you have to be a father? You are not worthy!”

After saying what she had to say, Bai Qing turned her back and walked out, leaving Bai Qingsong to stand there dumbly like an idiot as a sentence repeatedly played over and over again in his mind: You are not worthy!

Closing his eyes, Bai Qingsong felt a trace of regret in the innermost corner of his heart. He was thinking what could have been if he had not betray the Qin Clan by breaking the marriage proposal. Both of his daughter had such shocking talent, especially Bai Qing, who had condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer. This was a miracle even when compared to the entirety of Chu Country. However, she did not wanted to acknowledge him as her father.

Three days later.....

There was a forest region in the west of Sky Harmony City. In that region, a puppy with snow-white fur was chasing its tail, running in circles. Beside it, the body of a handsome looking youth laid on the ground.

The snowy puppy blinked its eyes, and it speedily dashed

forward, leaving the area. Several moments later, it returned, and not only that, two young ladies were following its lead.

“Little fellow, why did you bring me here?” One of the young ladies was clad in a white robe. With beauty that could be comparable to fairies, it was as if she was not from the human world. She ran behind the snowy puppy, as she abruptly paused. There was actually a human lying on the ground.

The snowy puppy crouched beside the body of the youth, its puppy eyes staring adorably at the white-robed young lady with a look so cute that it could kill.

“Qingcheng, we have been chasing this little fellow all the way from the Royal Capital to here. And now, because of a corpse, it voluntarily came to look for us.” Beside the white-robed young lady, there was another lady clad in green. She glared at the little snowy puppy as if she were extremely displeased.

“This little fellow seems to be teasing us. With its speed, it could obviously evade us if it doesn’t want to be found. What a naughty fellow.” Mo Qingcheng shook her head as she laughed bitterly. After doing so, she walked to the side of the youth and checked his injuries before stating, “He is unconscious because he suffered grievous injuries. Not only that, he has expended all his spirit, energy and qi.”

After her diagnosis, Mo Qingcheng withdrew a medicinal pill from inside her robes and placed it inside the mouth of the youth. Soon after, the medicinal pill melted, and the mystical healing energies started to flow into the youth’s body.

“Are you mad? That was a top graded 2nd-level medicinal pill!” The lady clad in green was dumbstruck. Medicinal pills could be classified the same way as Divine Weapons. A top graded 2nd-level medicinal pill was enough to cause cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm to go crazy over it. It was exceedingly precious.

“This must be fate; if not, we wouldn’t have met him. Nolan, there’s a straw house not far from here. Let us take a rest over there.” Mo Qingcheng carried the youth on her back as she spoke to the lady clad in green.

“Crazy, you have really gone crazy.” Nolan shook her head. If the people from the Chu Capital knew that Mo Qingcheng was actually carrying a male on her back, no one knew how great a commotion it would have caused.

And what was even more despicable was that during the trip, the hands of the youth were actually resting on the area in front of Mo Qingcheng’s chest. Occasionally, they would come into contact with Mo Qingcheng’s twin peaks, causing her face to redden, making her look even more alluring.

“What are you looking at?” The girl clad in green glared at the snowy puppy, who was following them by the side, before adding in a low tone, “This brat had the luck of the devil, enjoying such advantages even when he is unconcious.”

“Nolan, he doesn’t know anything yet, and this little snowy puppy seems to have spiritual intelligence. Now that we have

saved him, as I said before, this could be considered a form of fate.” Mo Qingcheng bitterly smiled. She had never thought that she be in such close proximity with someone of the opposite s*x.

“If the ten prodigies of the Royal Capital were to find out about this, I reckon that even if this kid has a few more lives, that would still not be enough for him.” Nolan shook her head; she was very clear about the status of the suitors who wanted to marry the white-robed lady. However, Mo Qingcheng’s heart had never once been moved by their attempts to woo her.

The two ladies arrived at the straw house, which was situated in an open area inside the forest region. It was a picturesque location, and there was even a creek beside it. Nolan was nursing the burning anger in her heart, but her anger soon turned into astonishment as she witnessed the snowy puppy holding a few stalks of medicinal herbs in it’s mouth, walking back together with Mo Qingcheng. “This little fellow is actually able to find spiritual herbs?”

The snowy puppy increased its speed as it shot forward, quickly arriving at Nolan’s side and tilting its head. Nolan rolled her eyes upon seeing hints of provocation in its eyes.

“Arrogant bastard.” Nolan scolded in a low tone, but she was secretly amazed. Mo Qingcheng walked by and smiled, “I told you that it had spiritual intelligence, but I don’t know what type of demonic beast it is. No matter how hard I try to persuade it, it refuses to follow me. It even led us to such a place.”

“Let me boil the spiritual herbs.” Mo Qingcheng moved towards

Nolan, who moved aside, relinquishing her position. The snowy puppy pranced about the straw house before lying down on the body of Qin Wentian. It only awoke after the spiritual herbs were fully boiled. Mo Qingcheng fed the medicinal extract to Qin Wentian.

Nolan deeply glanced at Qin Wentian, feeling bewildered in her heart. How could this fellow be so lucky that the most beautiful woman in the entirety of Chu Country would carry him on her back and feed him medicine?

TL Note:

Mo is a surname, Qingcheng means a woman so gorgeous that she could topple kingdoms.

AGM 030 – State Of Affairs

Under the careful observation of Mo Qingcheng, Qin Wentian's countenance gradually began to regain its color. Despite this, he still remained unconscious.

The snowy dog laid on the ground beside Qin Wentian, but intermittently, it would hop right up into Mo Qingcheng's embrace, causing a smile to constantly breakout on Mo Qingcheng's visage; this little fellow was just too adorable.

“Nolan, can you guess what type of demonic beast he is?” Mo Qingcheng questioned curiously.

“Who knows. Maybe it's just a common wild beast that's unable to cultivate.” Nolan replied

“How could there be such an intelligent wild beast? Still, you have a point; this fellow is just so small.” Mo Qingcheng smiled brilliantly — the radiance of her smile caused even Nolan to be slightly dazed. “Wow, you've been in such a good mood these past few days. Even I've never seen you smile before.”

“Well, there's no one else around anyway.” Mo Qingcheng shrugged her shoulders.

“How about him?” Nolan pointed to Qin Wentian, “You even hugged him previously.”

The cheeks of Mo Qingcheng involuntarily blushed, as they became tinged with the color of rosy red. She rolled her eyes at Nolan, following which, her gaze began to linger on the features of Qin Wentian as she added, “But still, he can be considered quite good-looking.”

“Ye WuQue is good looking too, but why have you always ignored him? Anyway, there were rumors saying that Ye WuQue entered into a marriage agreement with someone from the Sky Harmony City today, so he should already know that he doesn’t have the slightest bit of hope in winning your heart.” Nolan curled her lips slightly as she added, “Oh yeah, the Sky Harmony City is close to us — the Ye Clan’s annihilation of the Qin Clan should’ve been almost completed.”

Mo Qingcheng let out a sigh for the Qin Clan.

“Someone’s coming.” At that moment, Mo Qingcheng suddenly spoke, “He should wake up soon, it’s time for us to leave.”

After which, Mo Qingcheng walked out of the straw house as she spoke to the snowy dog that was still in her embrace, “Little fellow, are you willing to come with me?”

The snowy dog looked at her and licked her face a couple of times, before it leapt out of her embrace, returned back to the entrance, and squatted there while looking at her.

“Okay, I shall not force you. Since you like him, just stay by his side.” Mo Qingcheng smiled helplessly as she left with Nolan. The

snowy dog gazed at her back as she left, as if it was somewhat reluctant to part with her.

Shortly after Mo Qingcheng and Nolan left, there were indeed people approaching — three youths, two guys, and one girl.

“Ohhh, what an adorable little fellow.” The girl ran towards the snowy dog. However, the snowy dog seemed to have no interest in the girl, as it turned it’s back to her and entered the straw house.

“Brother, there’s someone here who’s fainted.” The girl, upon discovering the unconscious Qin Wentian, took out a flask of water from her belongings, and fed Qing Wentian a mouthful of water.

“Yan`er, just ahead of us is Sky Harmony City, let’s not find needless trouble. We’ll rest here for a day before proceeding.” One of the travel-worn youths, who was fully covered in dust, stated. In order to rush to the Royal Capital, he’d already ridden to death a few horses, and right now, was preparing to enter the Sky Harmony City in order to purchase better horses before travelling again.

“Understood.” Despite the girl sticking out her tongue, she was extremely good looking.

“Cough cough.” At that moment, Qin Wentian coughed twice, as he opened his blurry eyes. A beautiful countenance floated into his vision.

“You’re awake.” Liu Yan broke into a gentle smile as she discovered that Qin Wentian had awoken.

Qin Wentian sat up and, other than discovering the fact that his body only had a minimal amount of strength, found that he was basically fine. Not only that, he felt as if he’d even broken through, and had stepped into the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm. However, there wasn’t the slightest bit of astral energy within him currently — the burden that had been placed on his body had been too immense — controlling the gigantic body of the demonic ape had been akin to wanting to take his own life. Luckily, he had broken through his limits, and had regained consciousness.

“No wonder Uncle Black told me to only use that star-shaped object when my life was in absolute danger.” Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. It could still be considered that he’d gained a blessing from a disaster, breaking through to the next level. Although, he didn’t know that the reason for him breaking through to the 8th level was actually because of the pill that had been fed to him by Mo Qingcheng. That was also the reason behind his rapid recovery. If it wasn’t for that, his body would need at least another two to three months before it could recover.

“Thank you for saving me.” Qin Wentian thanked the youthful female. It was very obvious that this was a case of mistaken identity.

“No problem, it was just a simple matter. Is this little dog yours? He’s so adorable.” The youthful female smiled. Only now did Qin Wentian realise that there was a little white and furry puppy beside him. Upon seeing that Liu Yan was about to hug it, the

puppy hurriedly jumped into Qin Wentian's embrace.

"Liu Yan, it's time for us to leave." The voice of one of the youths drifted in outside of the straw house.

"Okay." Liu Yan replied, as she said to Qin Wentian, "This puppy is extremely intelligent, no wonder it's been waiting for you. Since you're already awake, I should get going. My name is Liu Yan. If there's a chance, let us meet again in the future."

After saying that, an extremely sweet smile broke out on the face of Liu Yan, before she turned and left.

"My name is Qin Wentian."

Standing up, Qin Wentian walked out while holding the puppy in his arms, only to see Liu Yan waving good bye to him. Not only that, he also noticed remnants of boiled spiritual herbs that were still emitting a lingering smell.

"Many thanks." Qin Wentian, looking at the back Liu Yan, lowly intoned, while far off in the forest, two pairs of eyes were currently observing Qin Wentian — they were none other than Mo Qingcheng and Nolan.

"Okay, we've confirmed his safety, however, it seems as though he thought that the one who saved him was the girl earlier. Do you want to reveal yourself and set the facts straight?" Nolan laughed as she looked towards Mo Qingcheng.

“Let’s leave.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, as she turned and departed.

Only Qin Wentian and the snowy puppy remained at the straw house. Qin Wentian curiously regarded the snowy puppy in his embrace; all the fur on it’s body was white, and it was extremely soft to cuddle against, just like a bundle of cotton. Its beautiful eyes revealed a hint of intelligence, as the puppy inclined its head, and curiously regarded Qin Wentian as well.

“You’ve been waiting for me?” Qin Wentian felt a this was a little bizarre.

The eyes of the puppy narrowed into slits, as if it was laughing at him, causing Qin Wentian to gasp silently in his heart — was this puppy able to understand what he was saying?

“It’s time for me to cultivate, you’d better go back to your home.” Qin Wentian gently spoke to the snowy puppy, only to see the puppy persistently leap back into his arms whenever he tried to put it down.

“Fine, since you don’t wish to leave, you can temporarily follow me.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled as he sat down cross-leggedly. Placing the puppy on the ground, he started his cultivation. He desperately wanted to know the current state of affairs inside of Sky Harmony City, but he still had to recover his strength first in order to ensure his own safety.

Astral Light cascaded down from the 5th Heavenly Layer, and fell

onto the body of Qin Wentian. The human body was a vessel that was capable of storing Astral Energy — the higher the cultivation realm, the more Astral Energy the body could contain. The Body Refinement Realm consisted of using the Astral Energy to temper one's four limbs and bone structure, so as to increase one's strength; after the cultivator stepped into the Arterial Circulation Realm, he could fully stimulate his body's acupoints, and tap into his potential. He could clear the pathways of his meridians and energy channels, store Astral Energy within all of the acupuncture points in his body, and hence, be capable of emitting immense power during battle.

Night soon approached. Qin Wentian felt that his whole body was extremely comfortable — he'd never felt this well before. His state of being was even more comfortable than when compared to before the time when he'd been injured; it was like his whole body was filled with strength. The reason for this was because, other than breaking through to the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm, the medicinal pill that Mo Qingcheng fed him aided him immensely as well. Of course, Qin Wentian didn't know that he'd just consumed a top grade medicinal pill of the second level.

Standing up, Qin Wentian contemplated his surroundings. This place seemed to be the forest that was to the west of Sky Harmony City. He'd once ventured here during his childhood years together with Qin Chuan and the rest for hunting. Naturally, he'd still recognise the surroundings.

After cleansing himself in the creek nearby, Qin Wentian departed, while the snowy puppy followed closely behind him, causing Qin Wentian to exclaim in astonishment.

Although it was the middle of the night, the streets of Sky Harmony City were lit up as bright as day, with huge lanterns placed in all directions. Despite the time, the streets were still bustling with activities. Most commoners would choose this timing to gather in inns, talk about the past, discuss the current heroes of their time, and enjoy drinking to their heart's content.

Qin Wentian halted his steps as he passed by an open-space wineshop as he heard voices drifting out of the shop, discussing some things that he wanted to know.

“The Qin Clan is in dire straits now. The Patriarch of their clan, Qin Wu, as well as their clan leader, Qin Chuan, have been captured, and been escorted to the Royal Capital. There's also news that they are currently detained in the prison, and will be executed at any moment. Even if they can escape execution, if they land in the control of the Ye Clan, I'm sure that they'd be played to death.

“Don't be certain too fast, the northwestern troops are already camped outside of Sky Harmony City. I heard that they intended to mobilise their forces and rush towards the Royal Capital tonight, and according to reliable news, it's not just the northwestern troops. Out of the eight main garrisons of our Chu Country's frontier troops, three of them have broken camp and moved, causing the area they were stationed at to become emptied, and invoke panic and anxiousness in the hearts of people.”

“How could they be so audacious?” someone exclaimed in shock.

“Audacious? Previously, they all had close connections with the Wu King. Now that the Royal Capital has trained its sights upon the Qin Clan, who knows when it would be their turn. However, at the very least, they were smarter than Qin Clan. They maintained their alliance, and didn’t do what the Qin Clan did – forsaking their military authority, and thus be banished to Sky Harmony City. Even though the Emperor was wary of their power, he knew that the alliance of the eight frontier troops had a power that couldn’t be easily suppressed. If not, if it leads to internal warfare, then the Chu Country may suffer heavy repercussions, by facing attacks from other countries that are close to it.”

“This time around, the three allied garrisons that are moving towards the Royal Capital, are purposely hoisting the flag of the Royal Emperor, while claiming that the Emperor was misled by members of the Ye Clan, and that he wrongly executed loyal ministers. As long as the three allied garrisons continue to exist, Qin Wu and Qin Chuan will still have hope to survive. But if they’re defeated, the Emperor will have no more scruples, and will immediately order the execution to be carried out.”

“I didn’t think that after the Wu King had shaken the world, there would still be a event of such commotion in the Chu Country. However, the defeat of the three garrisons is only a matter of time — I’m afraid that they won’t be able to hold out for about three years. And after the Qin Clan produced a Wu King, they produced another genius – Qin Wentian. But within three years, I’m afraid that even Qin Wentian wouldn’t have sufficient power to save them yet.”

“Speaking of Qin Wentian, he is indeed a hard to come by genius.

Were it not for him summoning that demonic beast and killing Ye Mo, the direct line of descendants of the Qin Clan would have been broken there and then. How would the Qin Clan have had sufficient time to wait for the reinforcements of the northwestern troops. Not only that, the second in command, Qin He, wasn't lacking resolution. Despite breaking a leg, he still commanded the Qin troops valiantly alongside the commander from the northwestern troops, and in the end, he even resolutely made a decision – to expel Qin Wentian from the Qin Clan.”

“Although on the surface that might look cold and unfeeling, in reality, that could be said to be a brilliant plan. By casting Qin Wentian out, they've severed the relations between the Qin Clan and him. Qin Wentian won't have any more connections with the rebellion staged by them. This way, Qin Wentian can safely enter the Emperor Star and focus on his cultivation. And with the strength of the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian will definitely be protected. This was a last, desperate, gamble by them. Severing Qin Wentian from the Qin Clan, so as to allow him to cultivate in peace — gambling on the fact that he'd have enough power to save Qin Wu and Qin Chuan before the allied forces of the three garrisons were defeated.”

“Right, the Qin Clan have placed the last of their hopes on Qin Wentian. In anycase, in this cultivation-oriented world, only those with immense, tyrannical strength, are able to control fate and destiny of the world. As long as one has enough power, what is a mere Emperor? With sufficient power, just a single world can cause blood to flow like river — after all, personal strength is the only thing that matters in this cultivation-oriented world.”

Lost in their thoughts and discussions, these people rambled on,

while fantasizing between themselves about being one of the chosen sons of heavens — wielding immense might and controlling the destiny of those who lived in the world.

Qin Wentian who was to the side, after hearing this information, felt an unknown emotion begin to emerge in his heart.

AGM 031 – A Long Journey

Taking in the fact that the three allied garrison were departing towards the Royal Capital, where Qin Wu and Qin Chuan were being detained, Qin Wentian understood that they were indirectly giving pressure to the Emperor. Only by taking such actions would be able to temporarily ensure the safety of Qin Wu and Qin Chuan.

As for the matter of expelling him from the Qin Clan, Qin Wentian was also very clear that this was all done with the intent to protect him. Perhaps during the time he disappeared, there had been some communication between Mustang and the Qin Clan.

“In a cultivation-oriented world, the stronger one is, the more absolute his authority would be. If there’s a day when I could soar through the heavens and reach the pinnacle of my might, I would definitely trample upon the so-called ‘imperial authority’.” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath as flames began to ignite in his heart. Since his first Astral Soul was condensed from the 5th Heavenly Layer, he could do the same for his 2nd, and 3rd condensation of Astral Souls. What he needed now was time...

Using the night as cover, Qin Wentian arrived at the Qin Residence without drawing attention to himself. In the distance, he discovered a few silhouettes that were riding their horses and carrying their luggages, as if they were prepared to go on a long journey.

“Sister Yao.” Mounted on their horses, the figures galloped over. After a few short moments, Qin Yao and the rest arrived at Qin Wentian’s location, and upon seeing him, Qin Yao stiffened.

“Wentian.” Qin Yao’s visage broke into a joyful smile as she dismounted from her war horse and sprinted towards Qin Wentian.

“Sister, Qin Shang, Qin Zhi, where are you guys going?” Qin Wentian asked.

“Wentian, Grandpa and Father were brought to the Royal Capital. Without another choice, the Qin Clan mobilised their troops and decided to launch an attack onto the Royal Capital. If we end up defeated, only death awaits us. Second Uncle decreed that we are to go to the Snow Cloud Country for our cultivation,” Qin Yao explained. Only now did Qin Wentian understand. “Even though the battle is imminent, victory and defeat have already been determined. Making the younger members of the Qin Clan leave Chu Country is the best decision.”

“For fear of prying eyes, we decided to leave during the night. The younger members of the Qin Clan would all leave in batches. Wentian, when you arrive at Emperor Star Academy, you must do your best to cultivate and not bother yourself with the matters of the battle.” Qin Yao’s eyes reddened as she tried her best to hold herself together

“I understand. The same goes for you all.” Qin Wentian heavily nodded his head. Wanting to topple the Royal Capital with their meagre bit of power was nothing but impossible. Despite knowing this, Qin He still had no choice but to proceed along with this decision.

“Oh right, Uncle Black has disappeared, and we are unable to find him. Second and Third Uncle are outside the city, so there’s no need for you to go to the Qin Residence any longer. Instead, you should just make for Emperor Star Academy as soon as possible,” Qin Yao continued.

“Uncle Black disappeared?” Qin Wentian displayed a puzzled expression on his face. He had initially wanted to ask Uncle Black about the matter of the demonic ape, but it seems that it was now impossible. Not only that, Uncle Black was someone with vast stores of knowledge, and had definitely been a figure of extraordinary status in the past. Despite this, Uncle Black refused to tell him about his parentage. Upon seeing the strength exhibited by the demonic ape as well as the mysterious tiny astral left behind for him by his old fogey of a father, Qin Wentian couldn’t wait to find out about his birth parents.

“Qin Yao, we should leave now to avoid the spies from the Ye Clan.” Qin Shang walked forward as he looked to Qin Wentian and stated, “Wentian, in the Qin Clan, your talent is the best. In the future, you will have great accomplishments. You must definitely become an ultimate existence, someone that has the ability to topple down empires with a single word.”

“Big Brother, I understand. As for revenge for Second Uncle, I will definitely make the Ye Clan repay this debt in blood.” Qin Wentian solemnly vowed. Qin Shang’s father was Qin He, and it was because of Qin Wentian that he had lost one of his legs. And now, despite his condition, he was leading the Qin troops towards the Royal Capital for the sake of the Qin Clan.

“After you’ve arrived at the Royal Capital, remember to stay cautious in all matters.” Qin Shang heavily patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders.

“Wentian, we will take our leave first.” Qin Yao eyes reddened, as if she couldn’t bear to be parted from Wentian. She extended her arms slightly as she walked towards Qin Wentian’s side. Upon seeing this, Qin Wentian gently smiled. He hugged Qin Yao into his embrace and patted her on the back before laughing, “Sister, don’t worry. Father will be fine. I will definitely work hard in the Emperor Star Academy. As for you, you must remember to be cautious in all matters after you arrive in Snow Cloud Country.”

“Right.” Qin Yao lingered in his embrace, unwilling to break apart. Only after Qin Shang and Qin Zhi mounted their warhorse did Qin Yao finally loosen her hold. With tears in her eyes, she added while struggling to smile, “Smelly brat, the next time we meet, you have to be strong enough to protect me, okay?”

Having finished speaking, Qin Yao turned her body and she stepped onto the ground, twirling her body in the air in a somersault before landing gracefully on her horse.

“Cha!” Qin Yao shouted, and the war horse galloped madly, moving like the wind. She did not turn her head back for a last look at Qin Wentian. Qin Shang and Qin Zhi galloped after her, and their backs gradually disappeared in the distance.

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian tightly clenched his fist, his gaze riveted onto the heavens. He was filled with a single, unwavering conviction—He had to get stronger.

“Shouldn’t you be on your way?” At this moment, a voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned, only to see the shadow of a figure walking towards him.

“I guessed that you would return. I’ve been waiting for you the last few days.” Francis led over two horses as he walked towards Qin Wentian.

“Hmmp.” Qin Wentian coldly snorted, his countenance growing cold. Murin’s arrogant look was carved deeply in his mind.

“I know you hold nothing but hatred in your heart for the Star River Association, but all that has happened had nothing to do with me. Murin has already returned to the Royal Capital after he realised that he had no way to control you. I believe that despite of Ye Mo’s death, the benefits the Ye Clan promised him should still be incomparably attractive. Not only that, Murin brought all the divine imprints that you’ve traded to him, including the ones you passed to me over to the Royal Capital, without leaving a single one behind.” Francis’s voice carried an icy tone as he explained.

“What does it have to do with me?” Qin Wentian coldly replied.

“I wish to acknowledge you as my master.” Francis’s words caused Qin Wentian to freeze. This haughty and arrogant weaponsmith actually wanted to be his apprentice?

“I know you question my character. Ten years ago, I became a Stellar Martial Cultivator, but because of my insufficient talent as

well as a weak affinity, I couldn't amount to much. During that time, there was a weaponsmith who told me that, there were countless ways to make my mark. Other than being a Stellar Martial Cultivator, I could devote my time into understanding the insights behind the mysterious divine imprints and become a weaponsmith. Hence, I decided to follow him. Ten years, I was an apprentice for ten full years before he was willing to bestow the simplest of divine imprints to me."

Francis was still angered despite the events that transpired so long ago, "Ten years, he wasted ten years of my life. But even with those few simplistic divine imprints, I've really work hard and clawed my way into the Star River Association, relentlessly improving my craft and obtaining new imprints. There, I finally had some small accomplishments. My experiences in weapon forging have already reached a stage where I'm half a step into the realm of a 2nd-level weaponsmith. As long as I could gain insights into a 2nd-level divine imprint, I would have the opportunity to truly become a 2nd-level weaponsmith. However, all of this was destroyed at the hands of Murin."

He had initially wanted to take his time to complete over the 2nd-level divine imprints that Qin Wentian had given to him in order to gain some insights. However, Murin shamelessly took them away from his possession by force.

"I, Francis, could not be considered a good man, but once I've obtained compensation, I would definitely forge a divine weapon for the buyer. Even though the quality was a bit lacking, I would still ensure that the divine weapon was forged according to the buyer's requirements. No matter what, I still have a bottom line which I'm not willing to cross. But as for Murin, that person has

no bottom line at all. But so what? I could only look at him from afar and lament that my abilities are insufficient. Even if I hate him, what could I do to him?”

Qin Wentian could feel Francis’s despair. Everyone had their own stories. The thorny path which Francis had trod on until now, struggling with every step to achieve his own ambitions, had his hope stolen and his dream easily shattered by Murin,

“And so what about it?” Qin Wentian calmly asked. Naturally, he would not let pity cloud his judgement.

“Qin Wentian, you have heaven-defying talent, and could even easily comprehend the mysteries of 2nd-level divine imprints which eluded the majority of us. If you spent your time forging weapons, you would certainly be able to gain incomparably attractive compensation, but I assume that you would rather use the time at your disposal for cultivation. For the rest of the mundane tasks, I could help you with them. I don’t need any compensation in return. I will do all I can to aid you on the path of your martial way.”

Upon hearing Francis’s words, Qin Wentian was slightly moved. He naturally understood that it was extremely simple for a weaponsmith to garner a fortune. But to forge a weapon, inscriptions of divine imprints were not enough. He would still need to spend a large amount of time to acquire the required materials etc. In the future, he would certainly not spend majority of his time on such tasks.

Even if Francis proposed this with a motive, Qin Wentian would

still accept. In this world, who would be willing to help others for free?

“You are a revered weaponsmith, but you want me to be your master? Won’t you feel that this somehow degrades your status?” Qin Wentian continued asking. After all, he had only divine imprints to offer in exchange for Francis’s services.

“You should know that it’s simple to add decorations on something that’s already beautiful, but it’s difficult to set fire to coals during a snowstorm. I, Francis, am still not that short-sighted. Although you are in dire straits now, as long as you endure this, I’m afraid that I wouldn’t even have the qualifications to carry your shoes in the future. By that time, would you still choose to accept me if I wanted you to be my master? To be your apprentice is a position of honor that I earnestly hope for. How would it degrade my status?”

“Not only that, I wish to personally witness the birth of a genius, I want to see Murin getting trampled viciously beneath your feet. When you are the one trampling him, I want to see if he can still maintain that arrogant face of his.” Rage burned in Francis’s eyes. Only by borrowing Qin Wentian’s strength would he be able to trample Murin, appeasing the hatred in his heart. He decided to gamble his future and placed all his hopes on Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian looked at Francis before glancing at the horses behind him.

“Was one of the horses prepared for me?”

“Naturally.” Francis stated as he looked at Qin Wentian with traces of nervousness in his eyes.

Qin Wentian strode forwards and he mounted upon a horse. At the same instance, a snow-white silhouette moved so fast, leaving behind after-images, scampered up and landed on to the back of the horse as well.

“This fellow, what a fast speed it possesses.” Qin Wentian cast a glance at the snowy puppy before tightening his legs, galloping away.

“Master, your esteemed self, please wait for me!” Looking at how the scene played out, Francis couldn’t help having a smile breaking out on his visage. He leaped in the air, landing onto the back of his horse, and galloped after Qin Wentian’s silhouette. After he caught up, Francis smiled nervously as he sheepishly added, “Master, do you think it’s possible to gift this lowly apprentice some tokens of appreciations for formally entering into an apprenticeship with your esteemed self? Just any casual 2nd-level or 3rd-level divine imprints would do. How about it.”

After looking at the wretched smile on Francis’s face, Qin Wentian rolled his eyes as he scolded, “Get lost from me, your father.”

After laughing, Qin Wentian dug in his spurs, causing his steed to increase speed. He continued galloping forward, preparing to rush through the night straight into the Royal Capital.

“Haha, Murin, you bastard, just you wait.” Francis burst out in laughter as he, too, increased his speed. After a few short moments, the two of them had already left Sky Harmony City, galloping on the main pathways under the beautiful starlight, dislodging clods of earth and dust.

Qin Wentian turned back his head and gazed at the imposing city walls. A resolute look of steel glinted in his eyes.

This was the first time he embarked on a long journey, Amidst the billowing wind, burying the past events under the flying clods of earth and gazing forth into the horizons, he added, “This cultivation-oriented world, filled with kindness, vengeance, emotions and enmity, better be prepared for my arrival. Here I come!”

AGM 032 – Royal Capital

The Royal Capital of the Chu Country had a land area of over 10 million li*, was the biggest city in the whole of Chu Country, and the population was 10 times that of the Sky Harmony City — it was exceedingly ludicrous.

* – Roughly 3,106,060 miles, or 5,000,000 kilometers.

At this moment, at the entrance of the Royal Capital, the dust-covered Qin Wentian sat atop his horse. He couldn't help but feel a slight tremble in his heart as he inclined his head and gazed at the majestic city walls.

The city walls were over 16m tall, and were manufactured from special materials. Even someone with a cultivation level that was at the peak of the Body Refinement Realm, couldn't hope to damage these walls.

“Master, we've arrived, let us enter the city.” Francis intoned in a low voice. Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head, as the of two of them dismounted from their horses and proceeded forward on foot in the direction of the city gates, joining the queue to enter the city. The city streets were paved with bluestones, and had a width of over 10 metres. Roars of beasts could be heard clearly, despite the fact that they hadn't even entered the city yet.

“There're so many strong cultivators around... and to think that so many of their mounts would actually be demonic beasts.” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, as he gazed excitedly in the distance. A short distance away, there was a demonic beast of immense size that looked to be a Viridian Ape. But what was truly

awe-inspiring, was that a young cultivator standing was actually standing atop the shoulders of the beast.

The Viridian Ape was a 4th-level demonic beast, and had a cultivation level equivalent to the Arterial Circulation Realm. To think that it was merely used as a mount...

Demonic Beasts could be classified into nine levels. 1st-level demonic beasts had a cultivation base that was roughly equivalent to the 3rd level of the Body Refinement Realm; 2nd-level demonic beasts had cultivation bases that would roughly be at the 6th level of the Body Refinement Realm; 3rd-level demonic beasts would be roughly equivalent to the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm.

Based on this analogy, 9th-level demonic beasts were all fearsome existences that had a cultivation base at the peak of the Yuanfu Realm. For Demonic Beasts that had strength beyond the 9th Level, they would then be able to transform into the shape of a human, shedding the form of their demonic bodies.

“Junior Brother.” At this moment, a voice drifted over, causing Qin Wentian to turn his head in the direction of the voice. There were two silhouettes that were walking over to him, and they were none other than Luo Huan and Mountain from the Emperor Star Academy.

A smile broke out on his face, as Qin Wentian stated, “What are you guys doing here?”

“Wasn’t it because of junior brother?” Luo Huan walked over and

placed her hand around Qin Wentian's shoulder, as her buxomy figure purposely brushing against the body of Qin Wentian. This caused him to smile bitterly, this senior sister of his.....

“The Ye Clan will usually have a couple of spies in this location. Naturally, teacher had to be more cautious, and because of you, I, your elder sister, have suffered a lot these few days.” Luo Huan fluttered her eyelashes flirtatiously as she pouted.

“Many thanks, Elder Apprentice Sister.” Qin Wentian exclaimed as he felt thankfulness in his heart. Teacher Mustang had it all planned out — he'd thoughtfully sent Qin Wentian's seniors to protect him, fearing that the Ye Clan might send men to ambush him here.

“Little Junior Brother gets shy too easily, I shall not tease you any further.” Luo Huan, upon seeing the embarrassed and awkward look of Qin Wentian, stepped back a few steps as she cast her gaze at the snowy puppy in his embrace, “What a beautiful little fellow, come here to sister.”

The snowy puppy blinked its eyes, following which, it leapt right into the bosom of Luo Huan. Causing eyes to pop out of their sockets, the snowy puppy began to rub its paws all over the Luo Huan's twin peaks — as Qin Wentian went slack jawed. Black lines appeared atop his head. Why was the puppy he had just adopted such a perverted dog.....

Luo Huan froze, before she broke out into laughter, her beautiful eyes looking at Qin Wentian, causing him to blush with shame.

“You really understand your owner’s intentions, yet you’re so much bolder than him.” Luo Huan hugged the snowy dog as she stated, causing the number of black lines on Qin Wentian’s head to multiply. At this moment, Luo Huan blew into a whistle, causing the shrill cry of a eagle to sound out from far up in the skies. A few moments later, a huge black eagle could be seen descending, as it landed behind Luo Huan.

“Junior Brother Qin, I’m called Mountain. Don’t mind Luo Huan, she always behaves like this, you’ll get used to it. Now, let us board the black eagle.” Mountain appeared much more simple and honest as he smiled. Qin Wentian nodded his head, while silently he thought in his heart that he would have to really temper his will-power if he would be hanging out with Luo Huan — the temptation was too great!

“The Royal Capital is too vast. If we don’t use flying transport, it would take too long to arrive at our destination. Let’s set off, while I give you a brief introduction of the places in the Royal City.” Mountain laughed, appearing amiable and easy-going. However, Qin Wentian had personally witnessed the might that Mountain was capable of wielding when he unleashed his Demonic Ape and Stoneman Astral Soul. He possessed tyrannical battle strength, as well as a terrifying defence.

Qin Wentian and Francis allowed their horses to roam free, and the four of them hopped aboard the huge black eagle. The black eagle cried out shrilly as it took off and soared through the skies, causing a gust of wind to blow past, and cause their robes to flutter about.

“Junior Brother Qin, although the Royal Capital is huge, each sector has its own laws of discipline. The current sector that we are in, is known as ‘The Slums’, which means that this section of the city is inhabited by temporary visitors, as well as people with no money or authority. The area of this sector, other than being the largest, is also the most densely populated, consisting of about half of the entire population in the entirety of Royal Capital.

The words of Mountain caused Qin Wentian to be immensely shocked. Looking down from a great height, all he could see was a vision of prosperity. Tall majestic buildings, crowded streets, demonic beasts mounts all about. The Sky Harmony City couldn’t even be compared to this, and yet, this was merely ‘The Slums’ sector.

“The Royal Capital has a total of seven sectors:

The first sector – ‘The slums’.

The second sector – A place where chaos thrives; a region where fish and dragons mix together; where crooks hang alongside honest folks.

The third sector – Where the Nine Academies and the countless minor clans are located.

The fourth sector – Where the Star River Association, Divine Weapon Stores, as well as all of the major clans are located.

The fifth sector – The ‘Aristocratic Sector’; a place where the nobles as well as extremely powerful clans reside.

The sixth sector – The Royal Palace.

Finally, the seventh sector – The Dark Forest.”

Mountain first described the layout of the Royal Capital, before going into detail. The Dark Forest was on the outskirts of the Royal Capital. The external boundary of half of the land owned by the Royal Capital, was surrounded by the Dark Forest. It abounded with countless demonic beasts, which means that the 6th Sector, the 5th sector, the 4th sector, and the 3rd sector's periphery was the same place – the incomparably dangerous Dark Forest

They treated the dangerous Dark Forest as a training ground.

The Royal Capital, was incomparably immense, filled with countless minor and major powers, while the Nine Academies was located within the heart of the city.

The speed of the black eagle was extremely fast, and about four hours later, it stopped as it hovered about in the air.

“Yiyah.”

“Roar.”

The sounds of the demonic beasts created an unceasing cacophony of noise. Qin Wentian's pupils contracted as he gazed at the flying demonic beast steeds hovering in the skies, as well as the various demonic beasts mounts that were on the streets. He couldn't help thinking to himself, ‘So many strong cultivators, so many demonic beasts!’

“Where is this place?” Qin Wentian felt shock in his heart.

Beneath him, there were several main roads that converged together, and lead simultaneously to the same place — through an arch-shaped, immense gate. The other side of the Arch Gate was incredibly spacious, but although there were many people, no flying steeds hovered about in the air.

“Haha, we’ve already passed through the first and second sector, and after passing through that Arch Gate, it can be considered that we’ve reached the heart of the Royal Capital – the 3rd sector, where the Nine Academies are located. In the 3rd sector, ordinary people aren’t allowed to fly. This special privilege is only granted to cultivators at the Yuanfu Realm, and our destination lies after passing through the Arch Gate — the examination ground of the Nine Academies’ recruitment area.

“Come, let us descend.” As Luo Huan’s voice sounded out, she jumped from the back of the black eagle, before landing gracefully onto the ground, and joining the endless stream of people who were walking in the direction of the Arch Gate.

“The beginning of Spring is also the day when the academies begin their recruitment. The majority of the youths in the Royal Capital choose to come here — how could there not be many people.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart. There were even people hailing from the Sky Harmony City, who’d come to the Royal Capital in order to partake in the recruitment examination.

“Junior apprentice brother has no need to take the examination again, you can proceed straight to the teacher who’s in charge of the examinations and obtain your Emperor Star Jade Medallion.

This Emperor Star Jade Medallion is something that only our Emperor Star Academy possesses, and it's critically important. The academy only allows the teacher-in-charge to pass the medallion to prospective students during this time of the year, which is why Teacher Mustang didn't give it to you earlier." Mountain explained as they walked on the road.

"Right." Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head, however, at this moment, the crowd of people suddenly surged over.

"Huh, what happened?" Mountain furrowed his brows. In the distance, they saw that the endless stream of people had parted to the sides, and that there was a draconic horse with a sedan mounted on it, trotting forwards. Many people were on tiptoes, craning their necks, as they gazed in its direction.

"Oh, it's that lass, no wonder it created such a huge commotion." Luo Huan laughed lightly. The sedan gradually moved forwards, and through the light gauze material that was covering the sedan, one could see two graceful and beautiful silhouettes within.

"Woof." The snowy puppy in the arms of Luo Huan leapt out of them, as it scampered towards the sedan, causing the expression of Qin Wentian to freeze.

Inside the sedan, Mo Qingcheng didn't even have the time to exclaim in surprise before she saw a snowy white shadow leap into her embrace. "Little fellow, why are you here."

Nolan, who was by her side, rolled her eyes, "This little rascal,

it's really comparable to a persistent ghost that insists on haunting us.”

Mo Qingcheng cast a glance at Nolan as she laughed. The sound of that musical laughter was capable of even moving the soul of humans. As she extended her hands and pulled away the curtains covering the sedan, it caused the gaze of the majority of those in the crowd to be fixated on her.

“How beautiful.”

“This is the number one beauty of the Chu Country — she’s just too beautiful. If I could just sleep with her for a night, I wouldn’t mind dying the next day.”

“What a beautiful lady.” Qin Wentian had seen plenty of beautiful ladies: Qin Yao, Autumn Snow... they were all top beauties in the Sky Harmony City. But compared to the lady in the sedan, even the top class beauties of the Sky Harmony City lost some of their luster.

Mo Qingcheng smiled after spotting Qin Wentian, as she closed the curtains again.

“Did she just smile at me...?” Someone beside Qin Wentian asked in a daze.

“Smile at your head, she was smiling at me.”

Hearing the conversations breaking out around him, Qin Wentian blinked his eyes. Was he, like those in the crowd, under the wrong impression? Just now, he'd felt that the lady in the sedan was smiling at him.

"Isn't she beautiful?" the sound of a voice drifted over.

"Extremely." Qin Wentian replied, very naturally, before his countenance stiffened, as he hurriedly turned his head back, smiling wryly, "Senior apprentice sister is beautiful as well."

However, Luo Huan wasn't someone who would fall for such antics. She only stood to the side, staring at Qin Wentian teasingly.

"Erm, based on Senior sister's charms, if you were to compete in the number of men who've fallen in love, then you'd definitely win hands down." Qin Wentian continued saying, as sweat rolled down his back.

"Your mouth is sweet indeed." Luo Huan lightly laughed, "But as for that lass, she's definitely at the grade where she could topple over kingdoms. No wonder even you were distracted. If I were a man, I'd also fall in love with the number one beauty of the Chu Country."

"Hehe." Mountain, who was at the side, chortled in agreement.

"But, after thinking about it, the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital all wanted to chase after her. However, not a single one of them

managed to obtain her approval. For ordinary people who still want to chase after her, I'm afraid that they would all fail badly."

"It seems like you can still be considered to know your own worth." Luo Huan laughed out loud, while at the same moment, a snow-white blur of shadow once again leapt up into her bosom.

"What a perverted puppy." Luo Huan cast a glance at the puppy, only to see the puppy burrowing itself into her bosom, refusing to budge an inch, while staring at her sorrowfully through puppy eyes — it was so adorable that it caused the heart of people to melt.

In the sedan, Nolan looked to Mo Qingcheng and asked, "Was it really him?"

"Yes, I didn't expect him to come to the Royal Capital too, and to think that that little fellow also tagged along with him" Mo Qingcheng lightly smiled, "I wonder what he come here for?"

"What? Our great beauty, miss Mo, would be concerned about some random guy she met?" Nolan teased.

"Who said so." Mo Qingcheng glared at Nolan.

"You're right. After all, our great beauty, Miss Mo, saved him. Not only that, there was also close physical contact, therefore it's perfectly normal for one to be concerned. But what a pity, that fellow doesn't know that you're the one who saved him," Nolan continued teasing. Mo Qingcheng was only somewhat curious, so

she could only bitterly shake her head, and endure the teasings of Nolan.

AGM 033 – Coalition Of The Nine Academies

After Mo Qingcheng left, Qin Wentian and the rest continued their journey, walking past the Arch Gate and arriving at to the other side. It was extremely lively; the majority of the crowd were about 15-16 years old, and the brimming, vigorous energy of youth permeated the atmosphere.

“Today is the day of registration for all the academies, which is why there are so many people.” Mountain explained. Qin Wentian also discovered that in this spacious area, the people were gathered into nine rows as they queued to register and take the required examinations.

“Look at that area in the middle. That area is assigned to our Emperor Star Academy. Wow, there are so many people queueing up to register.” Mountain pointed to a spacious area somewhere in front, where there were plenty of individuals with nervous expressions on their faces. In addition, there were some who left with downcast expressions; evidently, they had failed to meet the mark.

“Why is he the one assigned today?” Mountain’s brows slightly creased as he looked towards the elder assigned by the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Wentian glanced towards Mountain with a questioning look in his eyes before Mountain explained, “The elder in charge of the examination is named Janus, and within the Emperor Star Academy, there are two schools of thought. I, Teacher Mustang, belong to one of the factions who disdain interaction with the

aristocratic clans and the Royal Family, while Janus, belonging to the second faction, holds a viewpoint directly opposite from my own. He is in favor of forging closer connections with those who have authority and power.”

“And, previously, regarding the matters of your family, the Emperor Star Academy rejected the plea for help precisely because of the second faction.”

Having understood, Qin Wentian’s complexion returned back to normal. If the Emperor Star Academy had agreed to the request for help, Mustang and the rest wouldn’t have taken matters into their own hands.

“Let’s go. Since you’re already here, what else can he do?” Luo Huan’s eyes slightly narrowed as she felt an anxious feeling in her heart. The elder in charged wasn’t supposed to be Janus.

The few of them proceeded forwards and soon arrived at the spot reserved for the Emperor Star Academy. As the most famous academy in the entirety of Chu Country, there were countless people who would wanted to try to get in. Not only were there citizens of the Chu Country, there were even people from neighboring countries. As for the Emperor Star Academy, talent was the only criteria. As long as you were talented enough, you would be admitted regardless of nationality.

However, the rejection rate for the Emperor Star Academy was also the highest.

There were so many youths in queue that the line resembled the length a long dragon. Upon seeing Luo Huan's voluptuous figure approaching nearby, the hot-blooded youths all started to get lost in their fantasies.

As Luo Huan led Qin Wentian forward, a figure decked in white robes blocked their path. Emitting a razor sharp aura, this person had a pair of sword-shaped eyebrows and was 18 years old.

"Junior brother Qin, this person is named Orchon. His cultivation level is at the 8th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, and he has cultivated at the Emperor Star Academy for two years. He is extremely powerful, so you must be careful around him," Mountain lightly whispered.

"Senior Orchon." Luo Huan smiled as she approached Orchon, "I'm here to collect the Jade Medallion from Elder Janus."

Orchon calmly cast a glance at Luo Huan, and as he shifted his gaze to Qin Wentian, the look in his eyes became as sharp as the tip of a long spear. He coldly stated, "Go join the queue."

"Orchon, he has already passed Teacher Mustang's examination earlier in Sky Harmony City." Luo Huan's countenance turned chilly as well.

Orchon indifferently stared back at Luo Huan as he indifferently retorted, "So what?"

“Hmmpf.” Luo Huan coldly snorted as she turned to Janus, who was in front of her. She declared, “Elder Janus, under the orders of my teacher, I’m here to obtain the Emperor Star Jade Medallion.”

It was as if Janus had not heard her words. Without even looking at her, he directly replied, “Join the queue.”

“Elder Janus, Junior Brother Qin Wentian has already passed the examination set by Teacher Mustang.” Luo Huan, upon noticing that Janus has not even glance in her direction, had a somewhat unsightly expression on her face. It seemed like Janus was determined on using his official authority to achieve a personal vengeance. In the academy, this was the first time that Luo Huan had been at direct odds with Orchon; their confrontation reflected that of Mustang and Janus.

Only now did Janus shift his gaze over to Luo Huan and Qin Wentian. The look in his eyes mirrored Orchon’s sharp and chilly gaze as he replied. “What he passed was Mustang’s examination, not mine. In any case, we have already come to an agreement with the other academies: today was the last day of the examination, and those who passed the initial exams were to join in the coalition of the nine academies and enter the Dark Forest to participate in the hunting of demonic beasts as a training exercise. This exercise counts as the second examination; only those who pass will be able to enter into one of the nine martial academies.”

“Hence, it’s the same for him; even if he passed Mustang’s examination, if he wants to obtain the Emperor Star Jade Medallion, he would first have to survive the training exercise.”

“How long would the training exercise be?” Luo Huan coldly asked.

“A month.” Janus replied.

“If you don’t wish to participate, you can choose to give up and scam back to Sky Harmony City.” At this moment, another youth appeared beside Orchon, staring coldly at Qin Wentian.

At this moment, Qin Wentian could feel multiple stares being focused on his body. His sensory abilities had always been strong, and following his senses, he shifted his gaze over and discovered that in the area designated for the Royal Academy, there were many pairs of eyes staring at him. One of them, clad in a green robe and emitting an frosty air, was none other than Bai Autumn Snow.

The Bai Clan had already relocated to the Royal Capital. Autumn Snow, apparently, had also planned to join the training exercise sanctioned by the Coalition of the Nine Academies.

“Junior Brother Qin, they wished to deal with you.” Mountain explained, “I warned you to be careful of Orchon because he has close connections with Ye WuQue.”

Qin Wentian’s heart was as calm as a mirror. He had not expect that just as he stepped into the Royal Capital, there would already be a trap laid for him by the others, preparing to devour him in a single mouthful.

Naturally, the majority of the applicants had no idea that this expedition, other than being a training exercise, contained a secondary purpose: to deal with Qin Wentian. The majority of the applicants had no idea as to who was Qin Wentian; they only knew that this training exercise was extremely dangerous. Not long ago, the nine martial academies had informed everyone that they could back down if they feared for their safety.

Luo Huan glared at Janus as she asked, “How are we to determine the fairness of this examination?”

“According to the Coalition of the Nine Academies, all applicants would have to enter the Dark Forest without exceptions. Other than that, each of the nine martial academies, will send two elders as well as four seniors to oversee the operation and to prevent accidents from occurring. What are you trying to question?” Janus coldly countered.

“Then who are the representatives from our Emperor Star Academy?” Luo Huan continued asking.

“As for the elders, they are Mustang and I. The seniors will be both my disciples and his disciples. Mustang knows about this matter, to which he has already agreed.” Janus coldly laughed.

After hearing the answers, Luo Huan turned her gaze to Qin Wentian, only to find Qin Wentian lightly smiling as he replied, “I’m willing to participate in the training exercise.”

Upon his agreement, Qin Wentian noticed that the youth beside

Orchon had his lips curled up in a cold and disturbing smile.

“Let’s go to the side and rest.” Luo Huan led Qin Wentian away to the side.

“Junior Brother Qin, this time round, there seems to be many powers working actively against you. You must be cautious in everything you do. Not only that, the Dark Forest was already dangerous enough to deal with without you having to concentrate on defending against the treacherous people.” Mountain gravely reminded Qin Wentian.

“I’ll respect Teacher Mustang’s decision. As for the rest of the applicants who are planning to make a move against me, as well as the demonic beasts, I will definitely be cautious,” Qin Wentian replied.

“Just remember this: do not belittle or underestimate any of the applicants, especially applicants from the aristocratic clans that applied for the Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Academy. Some of them may be young, but without a doubt, their talents can all be considered monstrous.”

“Very well. Let’s wait for the training exercise to start.” Qin Wentian inclined his head, and his gaze accidentally glanced in Autumn Snow’s directions. Over there, Autumn Snow was surrounded by many youthful males and females, similar to the stars clustered around the cold, and beautiful moon. The reason for this attention, other than her own innate talent, also had to do with the marriage engagement between her and Ye WuQue.

“Master, why not let me go scout out some of the good resting places available in the Royal Capital?” Francis respectfully suggested to Qin Wentian.

“Fine, please do so.” Qin Wentian had no objections.

“I will wait for master to emerge unscathed.” Francis smiled and left. He believed that with his abilities, Qin Wentian would be able to turn this apparent danger into good fortune. He was still waiting for Qin Wentian to become the ultimate master weaponsmith in order to look down on Murin.

The first phase of the examination, sanctioned by the Coalition of the Nine Martial Academies, commenced. It evaluated the long lines of applicants with the speed of a wildfire. However, this has nothing to do with Qin Wentian, who was leisurely chatting with Luo Huan and Mountain.

Above the air, far away from the location of the examination, there was an immense demonic beast hovering in the air. The beast looked similar to a lion but had wings growing out of its back. From the pressure it was emitting, it was a terrifying 8th level demonic beast—a lionvulture griffin. Standing on top of the griffin were two silhouettes—Mustang and an old man.

“Teacher, when Janus agreed to the Royal Academy’s proposal, why didn’t you object?” Mustang asked, his face showing a lack of comprehension.

“Mustang, do you hold that youth in high regard?” Smiling, the old man countered with another question.

“I do. Not to conceal anything from my esteemed teacher, I really like the character of this youth very much. If I didn’t, then when they proposed this ‘training exercise’, I would not have invited your esteemed self to help me stop this training expedition to the Dark Forest.”

“Since you hold him in such high regards, why don’t you prevent him from joining the expedition?” The old man smiled as he viewed the vast spacious area where the applicants were currently undergoing the examinations. “There are truly some good seedings among this batch of applicants. I’m looking forward to the training expedition.”

Mustang smiled bitterly as he recited in his heart, “Little fellow, I’ve tried. I can only wish you good luck.”

“Grandpa, are you looking for me?” At this moment, a white-colored demonic crane flew up into the skies, and standing on the demonic crane, was actually the number one beauty of the Chu Country – Mo Qingcheng.

“Right. This time around, I want you to follow Mustang and go for a walk in the Dark Forest. It will do you no good if you keep staying at home.” The old man smiled kindly then turned his gaze towards Mustang. “Mustang, I will temporarily lend this 8th level griffin. Help me by taking good care of Qingcheng.”

Mustang froze. He did not fully comprehend the meaning behind the actions of his esteemed teacher. After a while, he nodded his head slightly towards Mo Qingcheng, but he was somewhat stunned. Even someone at his level would still be affected by Mo Qingcheng's beauty. Regarding the granddaughter of his esteemed teacher, he did not interact with her often, but despite of this, Mustang knew well enough that the ten prodigies in the Royal Capital were all fighting over her. But now, his esteemed teacher actually wanted him to act as a bodyguard for his precious granddaughter? For a walk in the Dark Forest? He couldn't help but wonder. Was there some other special intent behind this action?

AGM 034 – The Dark Forest

The shadow cast by the sun slanted to the west as the people in the spacious region began to disperse. The preliminary examinations had come to an end, and the nine martial academies had stopped their recruitment. There were many who left with downcast expressions on their faces, while the rest who remained began moving towards the Emperor Star Academy and Royal Academy, which was located in the centre of the region.

At this moment, a white-robed youth who carried a long sword on his back began to approach Qin Wentian and the rest. Qin Wentian had met this youth before in the Sky Harmony City. This was the sword-user who had condensed two sword-type Astral Souls.

“Luo Huan, Mountain, Teacher has instructions for you all to go over.” Yu Fei passed on the instructions as he walked over to them.

“Very well. Did Teacher have any instructions regarding which of us seniors would be chosen to enter the Dark Forest?” Luo Huan asked. According to the information she received from Janus, both Mustang and Janus would be able to bring two senior students of the academy with them.

“You and one more person, but Teacher didn’t reveal who it was,” Yu Fei answered, “Well, anyway, we will know once we get there.”

“Right, let’s go.” Luo Huan inclined her head in agreement as she

led the rest of them to the gathering point: The Martial Palace of the Nine Academies. There were a total of 5,000 participants who were eligible for the second examination: the training expedition to the Dark Forest. This was a shocking number. But if one were aware of the total number of applicants who applied to join the nine martial academies, then he or she wouldn't be so surprised. The number of 5,000 eligible participants was actually one percent of the total number of participants who applied.

The Royal Capital and the Martial Palace of the Nine Academies were the gathering points for all the young elites of the Chu Country.

“If you want to be strong, you must be willing to face all kinds of danger. Let this be your first lesson. Go and enjoy it thoroughly. Temper yourself through the baptism of blood.” An elder from the Royal Academy was shouting at them. All the applicants had solemn looks on their faces. Of course, they understood the fact that, without being bloodied, without undergoing some real life-or-death battles, they would never be able to become a real Martial Cultivator.

“Buzz!” Nearby, raging gusts of wind billowed as two demonic beasts flew overhead. Standing on the top of one of the flying beasts was a graceful and beautiful figure, who caused the eyes of everyone present to widen.

“How beautiful! It's Mo Qingcheng, she actually came!”

In this area, according to the rules set, cultivators who were not at the Yuanfu Realm had no rights to mount flying beasts.

However, Mo Qingcheng could, simply because there existed no one who would question her.

Janus and Orchon felt extremely surprised when they saw that Mo Qingcheng actually came together with Mustang. However, they suppressed their surprise well and stated, “Since everyone has arrived, let us be on our way. Everyone, start running, we must arrive at the Dark Forest before night falls.”

“Little Junior Brother, take care of yourself.” Luo Huan smiled as she glanced at Qin Wentian. She continued walking past him, all the way to the front as she led the crowd. That perverted puppy still remained contently in her arms, seemingly having no intention of budging an inch.

“Junior Brother Qin, I will await your arrival at the Emperor Star Academy.” Mountain patted Qin Wentian’s shoulder while the applicants from all the martial academies continued to form orderly rows. The various teachers who were in charge of each group were hovering in the air on flying beasts while all the applicants were running on land in the opposite direction.

The Dark Forest enveloped half of the Royal Capital. Obviously, entering from the front was impossible. Didn’t this mean that they would have to enter via the Royal Palace?

A total of 5,000 people were grouped into nine main camps. The Emperor Star Academy camp consisted of the least number of applicants—only 500—, while the Royal Academy had 800.

Tremors shook the ground as the 5,000 applicants sprinted forwards with all their strength, akin to the might of ten thousand galloping horses. Their powerful movements caused a raging wind to spring into existence wherever they passed. Smiles broke out on the faces of the spectators. This group of people would be the future pillars of the Chu Country.

“Hey.” A young fatty, who belonged to the Emperor Star Academy Camp, smiled as he greeted Qin Wentian. Although the speed at which they were travelling could be considered extremely fast, they were cultivators. This speed was still insufficient to exhaust them, and thus they would still be able to chat leisurely.

“What’s your name?” The youthful looking fatty asked.

“Qin Wentian. How about you?”

“Fan Le. Fan from the word ordinary, Le from happiness.” The fatty smiled.

Qin Wentian contemplated him for a moment. Fan Le was dressed extremely shabbily, with a messy head of hair and a grin on his face.

“This name really suits you.” Qin Wentian laughed

“Hehe.” Fan Le’s lips curled up in a good-natured smile, as his gaze shifted to the youthful lady who was flying on top of the demonic beast in the air, before saying in a low tone, “That’s the

number one beauty of the Chu Country The word ‘beautiful’ can’t even begin to describe her. Just seeing her would cause my heart to thump wildly.”

Qin Wentian looked at Fan Le’s mesmerised expression and couldn’t help but roll his eyes. Still, he had got to agree with Fan Le. Mo Qingcheng’s beauty was indeed out of this world, comparable to the fabled faeries.

“But still, Senior Apprentice Sister Luo Huan suits my taste more. That figure, that bosom, huehuehue.....” Fan Le had a wretched expression on his face and was almost salivating when he said that.

“You’re acquainted with Senior Apprentice Sister Luo Huan?” Qin Wentian asked

“How could I ever be acquainted with such a hot babe? All I know about her is that according to the rumors, she’s the hottest and most bewitching demoness in our Emperor Star Academy. Who wouldn’t know of her? But still, my thoughts earlier are just my fantasies, hehe.” Fan Le smiled as he turned his head, facing towards Qin Wentian. “But from your deadpanned expression, could it be that you already knew her.....”

Seeing the pervertedness in Fan Le’s gaze, Qin Wentian rolled his eyes as he scolded in a low voice, “Screw off!”

This fellow was most assuredly a genius.

“Stop acting, hehe.” Fan Le revealed a ‘You know that I know’ expression in his eyes, causing Qin Wentian to be speechless.

“But still, in the Royal Capital of the Chu Country, geniuses and beauties are everywhere. Look over there: Autumn Snow from the Royal Academy, a beauty with looks and talent, I heard that she condensed an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer on her first try.” Fan Le pointed his finger over to the crowd of applicants at the Royal Academy, as he explained to Qin Wentian.

“And there’s still our Emperor Star Academy. The geniuses here are as plentiful as the clouds. In front of us, that pretty boy named Orfon is extremely powerful. He is a 2nd level Arterial Circulation Realm cultivator, and possesses two Astral Souls.” Fan Le pointed in the direction of a youth who was in front of the line next to Orchon. It seemed that the two of them were brothers.

“And look over there at that beautiful lady garbed in black. She’s on the 1st level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, possessing two Astral Souls. Not only that, her figure is not bad either. It’s just that when compared to Luo Huan, she’s a bit off.” Fan Le spoke with the tone of an experienced connoisseur.

“But, in our batch, do you know who’s the number one genius in our Emperor Star Academy?”

“Who?” Qin Wentian curiously asked

“Well, that person is right in front of you.” The flesh on Fan Le’s face mashed together, as his smile got more and more wretched.

“Fan Le, are you boasting again?” Another person ran over, smiling as he look at Fan Le. Apparently, this was not the first time Fan Le had shamelessly boasted in front of people.

Qin Wentian laughed. This Fan Le was an extremely interesting person. Although he loved to boast, his sense of humour was pretty good.

As the sun setted, nine huge teams consisting of 5,000 people stepped out of the Eastern Heavenly Gate of the Royal Capital.

The Royal Capital was surrounded by the Dark Forest. Ever since the Chu Country was formed 3,000 years ago, it had experienced countless violent clashes against the demonic beasts living in the Dark Forest. Hence, the gate and walls that separated the Dark Forest from the Royal Capital were all built to be immensely sturdy and tall. They were an exceedingly majestic sight, akin to a heavenly moat surrounding a city.

After stepping out of the Eastern Heavenly Gate, there was another smaller city which acted like a buffer zone and connected the Royal Capital to the Dark Forest. In this city, there were plenty of cultivators who had come here for training, as well as many risk-takers who came here for a thrill. As they saw the 5,000 people from the nine martial academy camps approaching, all of them were stunned.

“Wow, could those be the applicants for the nine martial academies?”

“There’re so many handsome boys and beautiful girls, haha.” Nearby thrill-seekers discussed with a smile on their faces.

“Continue forward, set up your own camp within the Dark Forest.” A clear voice instructed while hovering in the air, causing the applicants to be slightly apprehensive. They had to spend many nights in this perilous Dark Forest and had to take care of their own survival needs, hunting the dangerous existences in the Dark Forest for food.

As night descended, the coalition of the nine academies finally arrived at the boundaries of the Dark Forest. Gazing ahead over the horizons revealed only an endless sea of ancient trees, as if there was no end in sight. A thick and heavy pressure of demonic Qi permeated the air.

As everyone halted their steps, the air was suddenly filled with an unusual silence. All of the applicants knew that in the following days, they would all face great danger.

The elders of the nine martial academies who were standing atop the flying demonic beasts hovering in the air, instructed the applicants, “Now, all of you are to enter the Dark Forest. By dawn tomorrow, you must all be at least 10 li away from the boundary of the forest. Treat the distance of 10 li as the boundaries of the designated “safe zone”. In the following month, if any one of you is discovered in the safe zone before the training exercise ends, you will automatically be deemed to have failed. Now, you guys can enter.”

The safe zone, consisting of a distance of 10 li, could be considered the outer perimeter of the dark forest, and hence, it was filled with human activities. High level demonic beasts would rarely appear, so it was much less dangerous.

“Qin Wentian, let’s stick together.” Fan Le requested.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded, as the nine rows of people belonging to the various academy camps all entered the Dark Forest. The 5,000 applicants dispersed in all four directions upon entering. Breaking up into smaller groups of two to three, they proceeded forward.

Borrowing the aid of the faint starlight, Qin Wentian and Fan Le wandered within the Dark Forest. There were some cultivators whose condensed flame-type Astral Souls that manifested ember sparks and lit up the area. There were also some people who used valuable items such as night illumination pearls to illuminate the path.

“Let’s just venture a little further before finding a spacious area to rest for the night. We will depart the safe zone before dawn, so it will not count as violating the rules.” Fan Le intoned in a low voice. Everyone was still stumbling in the dark as they tried to figure out their paths. Fan Le and Qin Wentian both had no choice but light wooden branches with flames created from flintstone in order to illuminate their way as they proceeded forwards.

“Wait, there seems to be someone staring at us.” Fan Le suddenly exclaimed in a whisper as they travelled. With his strong sensory abilities, Qin Wentian had also sensed it earlier.

In the Sky Harmony City, he had killed Ye Mo, Ye Lang and displayed his extraordinary talent. How could the Ye Clan spare him so easily?

It was highly probable that Qin Wentian was part of the reason why the training expedition was proposed in the first place. But at the same time, such training exercise, could enable the surviving students to gain real life-and-death experiences, so all the nine martial academies would have absolutely no reason to refuse.

TL Note:

凡乐 – Fan Le (平凡 – ordinary, 快乐 – happiness)

AGM 035 – The Genius Fatty

Before Qin Wentian stepped into the Dark Forest, he already knew there was a possibility that his enemies would be waiting for him. However since Mustang didn't object, it should be that Mustang wanted to use this expedition to temper him.

“Currently, my cultivation is at the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm and I possess the strength of a 100 bulls. I should still be able to deal with ordinary first level cultivators who are at the Arterial Circulation Realm. However, against Stellar Martial Cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm who possess terrifying Astral Souls, I have no confidence in my ability to defeat them.” Qin Wentian silently deduced. Then he whispered, “Fan Le, let us go our separate paths. I have enemies who plan on ambushing me in this Dark Forest.”

Under the soft glow of the ember sparks, the fatty's gaze shifted to Qin Wentian. His eyes shone with a strange light as he smiled, “I, Fan Le, am a supreme genius among this batch of applicants. How could I abandon my own comrades?”

“Don't you worry, although we are already in the Dark Forest, I doubt that your enemies would dare to make a move while we are still in the safe zone,” Fan Le assured him. “Let's go, there's light ahead. There seems to be an empty area.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian agreed. Although Fan Le's character seemed a little vulgar, he was still a good person at heart.

Ahead of them lay an open space, its landscape slightly inclined like a gentle mountain slope. There were already several others who had pitched simple tents and were preparing to rest.

“Qin Wentian!” a voice filled with surprise exclaimed. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze in the direction of the voice before his face broke into a smile. To think that he would meet a familiar face here.

“Liu Yan, what are you doing here?” Qin Wentian strode forward. He still thought that Liu Yan was the one who had saved his life previously.

“I’m participating in the examination to join the Divine Wind Academy. Anyway, quickly extinguish your light and come take a seat in the tent. The light might attract the attention of demonic beasts,” Liu Yan lightly admonished.

Inside the tent, other than Liu Yan, there were two other youths as well. One, was her brother, Liu Yue. The other was her friend, Zufan.

“Liu Yan, why did you invite strangers over?” Liu Yue’s eyebrows furrowed, while an unsightly expression of displeasure appeared on Zufan’s face.

“Brother, this person was the one we met in the forested region outside of Sky Harmony City. His name is Qin Wentian,” Liu Yan replied.

She glanced at Qin Wentian before asking, “Oh right, why did you enter the Dark Forest? Are you participating in the training expedition as well?”

“We are the applicants under the Emperor Star Academy.” Fan Le straightened his clothes as he walked forwards, his arm extended. “Beautiful lady, I trust you are doing well. My name is Fan Le, and I’m from the Emperor Star Academy.”

“Emperor Star Academy.” The beautiful eyes of Liu Yan flashed, as she also extended her hand to shake hands with Fan Le.

“Liu Yan, you are both beautiful and talented. How rare.” Fan Le said.

Liu Yan smiled as she wanted to retract her hand, but Fan Le seemed to have no intention of releasing his grip.

“Does this tent belong to you? You guys sure are experienced in the ways of the wild.

“Is Qin Wentian your friend? He is my best buddy. Which means you are also my friend!”

Qin Wentian’s eyes almost popped out of his sockets, dumbstruck, as he witnessed Fan Le continue to babble nonsense while holding the hands of Liu Yan’s. This fellow, he was truly a fine specimen.

Liu Yan blushed as her face was dusted with redness. When she finally managed to retract her hand with difficulty, she cast a glance at Qin Wentian.

“I don’t know him.” Qin Wentian replied as cold sweat flowed down his back. This fellow was just too embarrassing.

“The two of you, since we met by chance, we can also be considered friends. Although this is just a simple tent, you are welcome to share it with us, and rest here for the night.” Liu Yue walked over as he smiled at Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

“That’s right, that’s right. Then we’ll do as you ask instead of standing on ceremony. We will take you up on your suggestion.” Fan Le excitedly accepted while Qin Wentian stood to the side, speechless.

“Liu Yan, Fan Le, I shall go for a walk. The two of you can chat first.” Qin Wentian smiled as he walked out of the tent.

“This fellow.” Fan Le glared at Qin Wentian, before saying to Liu Yan, “I’ll see you later then, Liu Yan.”

When he caught up to Qin Wentian, he asked, “What happened? Don’t you like Liu Yan?”

“Nope, although her personality is not bad, her two companions don’t really seem to welcome us. Why linger there longer than necessary?” Qin Wentian commented. Fan Le could also tell from

their previous interaction that the two companions of Liu Yan obviously didn't like them. It was only when he said that both Qin Wentian and he were from the Emperor Star Academy, that the attitudes of Liu Yue and Zufan changed.

“And in any case, I can still sense murderous auras hidden out there staring at me. What I need now is to rapidly increase my strength. How can I disappoint them?” Qin Wentian lips curled up in a chilly smirk, causing Fan Le's expression to freeze. That smirk on Qin Wentian's face was cold and piercing, as if he was baring his fangs.

“Fine, fine, let the top genius of the Emperor Star Academy play with them too.” Fan Le's lips widened in a smile

Qin Wentian ignored Fan Le's boast as he walked towards an ancient looking tree, before sitting down cross-legged. He closed his eyes in preparation for cultivation. An instant later, crackling and ripping noises resounded from his body, akin to the roars of ferocious waves in a raging ocean.

Fan Le narrowed his eyes. What a tyrannical technique. Well no matter, it was time for him to show his worth.

His body flickered as Fan Le dashed forwards, deeper into the Dark Forest.

Bathed in starlight, Qin Wentian looked to be at peace. But inside his body, his Astral Energy surged and resonated with the starlight cascading down on to him. The tyrannical force gushed about

within him, refining his inner organs as well as his Stellar Meridians, unceasingly perfecting his body.

The second day, before dawn approached, the applicants were all already on the move. Qin Wentian opened his eyes, only to see the fatty, Fan Le, lying down beside him with a new bow and a few arrows clutched in his hands.

“Fatty, it’s time for us to go.” Qin Wentian prodded him. Fan Le rubbed his bleary eyes as he yawned widely, before grinning at Qin Wentian.

“How did you craft that bow and those arrows?” Qin Wentian asked, curiosity evident in his tone. Although the equipments looked crude, they gave off a sensation of incomparable sharpness.

“I chopped down a few ancient trees and killed a few demonic beasts.” Fan Le nonchalantly replied. “Let’s go.”

“Right.” The two youths matched their gaze before straightening their bodies, rapidly making haste further into the Dark Forest. Their speed was like a raging wind, and in the blink of an eye, their silhouettes had disappeared.

Shortly after, a line of youths dashed over. What was shocking was that Orfon from the Emperor Star Academy was among them, together with various youths from the other martial academies.

“After them! We can finally act after we exit the safe zone!”

Orfon coldly shouted, as the group of them dashed madly after Fan Le and Qin Wentian, akin to a leopard stalking its prey by tracing its steps.

“Fatty, wow, you actually run this fast.” As the first light rays of dawn appeared, Qin Wentian saw Fan Le who was running beside him, moving like an agile panther in the jungle. His excess fats didn’t seem to bother him at all. Fan Le’s movements were nimble and superbly coordinated, involuntarily causing Qin Wentian to stare at him in wonder.

“Well, I am a genius.” Fan Le boasted.

Qin Wentian laughed. He glanced at Fan Le who stated, “There’s a total of six people chasing us from behind.

“There’s Orfon who’s at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Other than that, there’s one more guy at the 1st level of the Arterial Circulation Realm and four others at the Body Refinement Realm. They will be somewhat difficult to fight. Let’s make them expend their energy first.” Fan Le stated, causing Qin Wentian’s eyes to shine with a strange glow.

This fatty was actually able to deduce one’s level of cultivation so easily. Could he actually be a real genius?

“There’s someone ahead.” Qin Wentian stated as his gaze was directed to a spacious region, far off in the distance, in front of them.

“People from the Royal Academy. The one leading them is Ye Zhan. I’ve seen him taking the examination over at the Royal Academy before. His cultivation should be at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. I can even feel his killing intent from so far away. Just who have you actually provoked? Quick, let’s change direction.”

After Fan Le spoke, he immediately sprinted to the left. Qin Wentian quickly followed, with no hesitation. In order to kill him, the Ye Clan had truly pulled out all the stops, expending a lot of effort. The power and authority they wielded in the Royal Capital was second to none. If he had not joined the Emperor Star Academy, he might have already died abruptly due to unknown reasons.

Teacher Mustang had really set an extremely difficult test for him to pass. But, so what? Didn’t he already gain a good buddy from this trial?

“Fan Le, thank you.” Qin Wentian expressed his thanks while they were running.

“Don’t be jealous. This fatty, me – my talent is so great that it even overshadows the clouds. In the future if there’re any beautiful girls you have no interest in, please remember to recommend them to your brother fatty.” Fan Le grinned.

Their pursuers still followed their trails relentlessly. An hour later, they were already deep inside the Dark Forest where traces of demonic beasts activities lingered all around.

“There are still four people pursuing us. Fatty, what’s their cultivation level?” Qin Wentian asked.

“There’s Orfon, that other person at the first level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, as well as two others at the Body Refinement Realm. Do you want to deal with them?” Fan Le asked.

“Do it.” Qin Wentian decisively answered, as he halted his steps, only to see that Fan Le had channeled the Astral Energy to his feet. The fatty stomped on the ground before leaping through the air, landing on top of a gigantic tree. He smiled and said to Qin Wentian, “Let me direct the battle while you do the killing. Aim for the two at the Body Refinement Realm first.”

“Fine, we’ll do it your way.” For reasons unknown, Qin Wentian felt as though he could trust the vulgar fatty with his life. His steps solidified as he turned around, preparing to face his pursuers.

Orfon and his lackies, seeing that Qin Wentian had stopped, also slowed their steps. Akin to poisonous snakes, their gazes were staring right at Qin Wentian, not masking their killing intent. The four of them fanned out as they approached Qin Wentian.

“So this time round, how much strength has the Ye Clan mobilised in order to kill me?” Qin Wentian directed his question to Orfon.

“Ye Clan? There’re plenty of people who wish to kill you and your crippled second uncle. How dare he rebel? It’s only a matter

of time before his head will be on the chopping board. For Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, they have already been detained and locked up in the Black Castle Death Prison.” Orfon laughed coldly as he waved his hands, signaling his henchmen to rush towards Qin Wentian in three different directions, unveiling his desire to kill.

“Thwish.” Abruptly, from the back of Qin Wentian, an incomparably sharp arrow surged past with terrifying speed. As fast as lightning, it flew directly towards Orfon.

“Your left.” Fan Le’s voice transmitted over, as Qin Wentian immediately lunged towards his left, towards a cultivator at the Body Refinement Realm.

“Thwish, thwish, thwish.....” Arrows were continuously released, aiming for the three other cultivators, only leaving the one on the left for Qin Wentian.

“Break.” Orfon unleashed his spear-type Astral Soul. Resplendent astral light gathered onto the long spear he wielded, piercing outwards in the direction where the arrow was incoming. However, the arrow which Fan Le shot seemed to have a life of its own. Its flight path was extremely erratic, and even shifted in directions a few times, brushing past the Orfon’s long spear before flying straight towards the centre of his forehead.

“What the?” Orfon’s expression underwent a drastic change as his left palm suddenly exploded forth with Herculean strength while his body rapidly retreated, barely blocking the arrow. Despite his precautions, the arrow still managed to pierce through his palm, causing fresh blood to leak out, painting the ground red.

“An arrow that’s able to change it’s direction?”

Not only Orfon was faced with this predicament. His other two lackeys were dealing with it as well. Not only that, one of the cultivators at the Body Refinement Realm had died on the spot, as the arrow pierced through the space between his brows.

Even before the arrows came into contact with the three of them, Qin Wentian had unleashed a strike akin to the roar of a raging dragon towards the other cultivator at the Body Refinement Realm. The other cultivator, refusing to back down, returned the greeting with a fist of his own. But when the fist of the cultivator struck out, he instantly regretted it. The strength contained within his strike was incomparable to that of Qin Wentian.

The sounds of bones breaking echoed, as the Qin Wentian’s Dragon Subduing Fist sliced through the cultivator like a hot knife cutting through butter. His opponent didn’t even have the time to unleash his Astral Soul before his body was shattered by the pressure of the fist.

And just like that, in an instant, Qin Wentian and Fan Le had already killed two of their pursuers.

AGM 036 – Let The Power Of Youth Explode!

Qin Wentian turned his head back for a look, only to see Fan Le repositioning himself nimbly on the tree, as easily as though he was moving on the ground

“Formidable.” Qin Wentian smiled as he glanced at Fan Le.

Fan Le steadied himself, as he bended the bow in his hands until it took on a shape resembling that of a full moon, nocked with three arrows.

“This fatty me, is a genius.” Fan Le grinned, however, Qin Wentian couldn’t disagree. This vulgar fatty, was indeed a genius.

“You better not interfere in things that has nothing to do with you or I will make you die a terrible death.” Orfon glance ruthlessly on Fan Le, who was up the tree, emitting killing intent.

“Deal with the one at the side first.” Fan Le continued grinning, as if he had not heard what Orfon said. Qin Wentian nodded his head, as he lunged towards the youth standing next to Orfan, with a cold look in his eyes.

As the sound of Fan Le’s voice faded, at that instant, the three arrows which he fired into the air, transformed into three sets of incomparably sharp swords, all targeting Orfon. And just as the three arrows transformed, Fan Le had another three arrows ready to fire, with no wasted movements, as if he was one with the bow. This time round, an Astral Soul could be seen flickering behind

him, exceedingly resplendent.

Through the 9 Heavenly Layers, there were billions and trillions of Constellations. It was possible for all kinds of Stellar Martial Cultivators to exist. As for Fan Le, his Astral Soul was condensed from a bow in the shape of a crescent moon.

At that instant, the arrows nocked glowed with Astral Light, as they were fired into the skies.

Qin Wentian was already clashing with lackey beside Orfon. The two of them released their Astral Souls, the Heavenly Hammer glowed with an incomparable radiance, while the Astral Soul of Qin Wentian's opponent, was a Icy Mountain, imbuing every strike of his with a cold and icy effect.

“Peng!” as their palms met, Qin Wentian could feel a surge of icy energy entering his body, attempting to freeze his Stellar Meridians. While the palms of his opponent trembled, as he was forced apart from the impact, almost to the point of numbness. Although Qin Wentian was at the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm, the strength he was capable of, far exceeded that.

“What happened?” All of a sudden, Qin Wentian's furrowed his brows in worry, it was as if there's a huge surge of Demonic Qi heading their way.

“There's a herd of demonic beasts coming our way. Qin Wentian, kill him quickly.” Fan Le's countenance grew heavy. This time, he relinquish control over the directional-changing arrows, and with

the full might of his Astral Soul, Fan Le quickly shot out a straight arrow, sealing Qin Wentian's opponent path of escape.

“Rumble!” The tyrannical Astral Energy in Qin Wentian's body surged about frenziedly, flowing like the tides of the ocean along his Stellar Meridians. His whole being resembled a raging dragon as he launched his attack with a mighty roar.

His opponent's countenance paled as another arrow descended towards him with terrifying speed from above. The temperature of the surrounding lowered drastically as both of his hands were transformed into ice pikes that were used simultaneously to block the incoming arrow and to strike at Qin Wentian.

“DIE!” Qin Wentian roared. His boundless strength smashed the ice pike into ice fragments, striking forth with a tyrannical energy that fiercely shook the opponent's body. Although his opponent tried to retreat, the arrow imbued with Astral Energy, pierced right through his brain, nailing him to the ground.

Orfon could do nothing but watch his comrade die in vain. He was prevented from helping by the rapid arrows fired in quick succession from Fan Le's bow. Although the power behind Fan Le's arrows was nothing exceptional, Fan Le's degree of control was god-like. The arrows shot by him could even change direction mid flight, catching opponents unaware.

At this moment, the demonic Qi grew stronger and stronger. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over and saw a pack of demonic wolves madly galloping to this direction.

“Run!” Fan Le shot out three more arrows, jumped down from the gigantic tree, and turned his body in the other direction to escape. Qin Wentian also came to his senses and joined the fleeing Fan Le.

“KILL THEM ALL!” Behind them, Orfon was cursing away. This time around, he had thrown away all his face and assembled a group of four people to pursue Qin Wentian, but other than him, the others had all died. What was even more infuriating was that even though he possessed a strength so much greater than of either of his opponents, he was unable to fully utilize it due to the suppressing volleys of arrows unleashed by Fan Le.

Qin Wentian froze. He tried to comprehend the meaning behind Orfon’s words, before glancing at Fan Le, who was by his side.

“From the top of the tree, I could see a mass of people sprinting towards this area behind the demonic wolves. Perhaps they were controlling the king of the demonic wolves. There should be people amongst them who condensed a beast-taming type Astral Soul.” Fan Le’s face was full of worry, but he continued, “Luckily, the Astral Soul you condensed is extremely tyrannical. To think that you were capable of producing such strength while you are only at the 8th level of the Body Refinement Realm.”

This fatty, was he a genius or an idiot? In such an urgent situation, he still had the time to analyse my Astral Soul? Qin Wentian speechlessly looked at Fan Le before saying, “Let’s think of a way to preserve our lives first. The demonic wolves in this forest are clearly faster than us, and they could easily tear apart

tree trunks, so climbing up a tree is not an option.”

“I think there’s no way for us to escape,” the fatty said in a gloomy tone.

Swiftly after, the shadow figures of demonic wolves appeared one after another, dashing in front of them from the sides while continuously running forward. This pack of demonic wolves were obviously herding them and treating them like prey.

Just Qin Wentian and Fan Le were surrounded, the demonic wolves in front halted their steps and turned around, baring their fangs. Their cruel gaze was filled with traces of terrifying madness.

“Thud, thud.....” Qin Wentian and Fan Le halted as well. Qin Wentian saw that Fan Le had thrown his previous bow away. In its place, a radiant corona surrounded his hand as Astral Light manifested, coalescing into the form of an Astral Bow.

“Let the power of youth explode!” As the sound of Fan Le’s voice faded away, his whole body lit up like a bonfire. Waves of terrifying Astral pressure were emitted from him, and the resplendent Astral Light blazed brightly like the Sun, causing the surrounding wolves to hesitate and even slightly retreat. Traces of fear could be seen in the eyes of the wolves as the pressure emitted from Fan Le escalated and began to soar upwards, intensifying rapidly.

“Brother, cover me. We have to kill the Wolf King.” Fan Le’s sharp gaze landed onto the Wolf King, a wolf of immense stature.

“Buzz!” A ray of resplendent Astral Light shot forth like a shooting star, in the direction of the huge Wolf King. The Wolf King roared and swiped a claw that shined with a cold light, but its strength was insufficient to block the Astral Arrow. The arrow continued, aimed at the Wolf King’s head.

“Howl.....” The huge wolf leaped backwards, trying to avoid the arrow. The Astral Arrow moved like it had a pair of eyes; it spun through the air, following the movements of the Wolf King.

The huge wolf’s expression mirrored a man in the throes of terror. Knowing that it would not be able to evade the arrow, the huge wolf moved his paws in front of him, hoping to at least soften the impact of the Astral Arrow. However, the Astral Arrow suddenly changed its path of flight and pierced through the one of the Wolf King’s hind legs, causing the huge body of the Wolf King to be nailed to the ground by the immense power of the Astral Energy.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le immediately sprang forth, dashing towards the Wolf King. Several wolves appeared, blocking Qin Wentian and Fan Le’s path.

“Scram!” Qin Wentian released his Astral Soul, and a Heavenly Hammer materialized in his hands. Jumping up in the air and wielding the hammer in graceful arcs, the hammer that was bathed in Astral Light exploded the body of a wolf, causing flesh and blood to splatter everywhere.

Qin Wentian's movements flowed continuously without stopping as he channeled the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement technique in a dance. Striking at the demonic wolves on his left and right side. He slaughtered a path through the blood of the demonic wolves.

Fan Le's gaze remained fixed onto the body of the Wolf King. Sprinting forward, he trained his Astral bow, onto the Wolf King and fired three explosive-type arrows in rapid succession. That Wolf King still wanted to use its paws to soften the impact of the arrows, but how could it manage to do so when Fan Le fired his arrows at such close proximity? The strength contained within the explosive-type arrows were extremely violent and domineering. Two of the arrows directly exploded the Wolf King's paws, while the final arrow exploded its head.

"Beautiful." A wide smile broke out on Qin Wentian's visage. That Wolf King was at the very least a demonic beast of the 4th level. Getting slaughtered so easily by Fan Le despite its strength being equivalent to an Arterial Circulation Realm Cultivator of the 2nd level? At this moment, Fan Le's figure seemed to be taller than before, giving Qin Wentian that feeling that Fan Li was extremely dependable.

"Awooo....." At this moment, the cold sound of a wolf's howl resounded throughout the Dark Forest. Behind the demonic wolves, two figures appeared. One was a youth clad in beast skins. With a cold look on his face, he sat on top of an immense wolf.

Beside him. Orfon also appeared, smiling coldly while looking at Qin Wentian and Fan Le. In his eyes, they were already dead.

“I never would have thought that among this batch of applicants of the Emperor Star Academy, there would be one that possessed a Bloodline Limit.” Orfon looked towards Fan Le in shock.

Fan Le actually possessed a Bloodline Limit that enabled to utilise its power to aid him in battle!

“Bloodline Limit.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart. Under the teaching of Uncle Black, of course, he knew what a Bloodline Limit was.

Depending on their affinity, sensory abilities, talent, and willpower, cultivators condensed their Astral Souls through innate links with certain constellations. There were some that possessed tremendous amounts energy in their blood, an energy that could be inherited by descendants from the same bloodline. However, not every descendant would be able to awaken the latent power of their bloodline. Some would be able to, while others would not. After a few generations, the bloodline would almost inevitable be thinned and diluted. However, there was still some exceptions that could somehow ignite their potential, causing the blood within them to awaken. Thus, they possessed the power granted to them by the bloodline of their Ancestors.

In addition, there were different types of Bloodline Limits that grant different powers and enhancement to the cultivators. As for Fan Le, his bloodline enable him to ignite the potential within his blood, greatly enhancing his combat ability.

“What bad luck. To think that we aimed for the wrong person.” Fan Le cursed in a low voice before shifting his gaze to Qin Wentian. “The name of my Bloodline is called the Bloodline of the Empyrean Flames, and it’s able to greatly enhance my combat abilities. I can transfuse the energy of my bloodline to you, causing the blood in your body to temporarily have the same effect as my Empyrean Flame Bloodline, thereby greatly enhancing your combat ability.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head in agreement. Fan Le wasted no more time. The energy levels around his palm began to fluctuate, eventually transforming into a blood palm that imprinted its mark onto Qin Wentian’s back.

The energy of the Empyrean Flame Bloodline surged into Qin Wentian’s body via the blood imprint. At this moment, Qin Wentian could feel the blood in his body churning as the power within him began to soar.

“Rumble!” In that instant, Qin Wentian trembled violently. Currently, the pressure released from his body was capable of causing the hearts of the most stalwart cultivators to shudder in fear.

“Huh?” Fan Le was dumbstruck. As he looked at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian’s face was flushed red while his body seemed to emit a terrifying surge of strength that seemed to be on the level of a primordial beast. He trembled violently, as if the energy intended to devour Qin Wentian himself.

“What happened?” Fan Le asked

“I have no idea. In my blood, there seems to be a bizarre energy that’s devouring the energy from the Bloodline of the Empyrean Flames you transfused into me. I can’t control it any longer.” Qin Wentian’s body convulsed as it trembled even more violently than before.

“Your Grandpa! Rejection of a bloodline? Is this even possible?” The excess flesh on the Fan Le’s face shuddered. Qin Wentian also possessed a Bloodline Limit, and from the looks of it, it appeared that his bloodline was an even higher grade when compared to the Bloodline of the Empyrean Flame that Fan Le possessed.

Fan Le understood clearly that usually, the power of those with Bloodline Limits would remain hidden and only surface under special circumstances. Qin Wentian was exactly someone that possessed an unawakened bloodline, which was slowly starting to awaken as a result of coming into contact with his Bloodline of Empyrean Flames

“I wonder if it is possible to fully awaken Qin Wentian’s bloodline. If he succeeds, Qin Wentian will be able to utilise the power of his bloodline to aid him in combat. But if he failed, the bloodline Qin Wentian possesses will be lost forever.”

AGM 037 – Inverting Black And White

Orfon's gaze got increasingly colder as the killing intent in his eyes got denser and denser. He witnessed Qin Wentian and Fan Le getting surrounded by the pack of demonic wolves.

Possessing a Bloodline Limit was extremely rare, and maybe not even one in 10,000 would have them, but both of these two fellows in front of him actually possessed one? They must be eliminated before they have the chance to mature.

“Makino, do it.” Orfon spoke to the youth clad in the beast skin. The one called Makino was sitting atop the demonic Wolf King.

“Sure, Orfon, but remember that I helped you today.” A cold smile broke out on Makino's face, causing those who saw it to feel that the smile was extremely demonic in nature. Makino howled, and at the same moment, the demonic wolves sprang into movement, pouncing towards Qin Wentian and Fan Le. These demonic wolves were all 2nd-level and 3rd-level demonic beasts, and as for the Wolf King he was sitting on, it was a 4th-level demonic beast.

“Are you okay?” Fan Le asked in concern as he fired his arrows in rapid succession. All the 2nd-level wolves he hit had their bodies exploded under the terrifying might of his Astral Arrows, but the 3rd-level wolves were not as easy to handle.

3rd-level demonic beasts were equivalent to human cultivators at the 7th, 8th, and even 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm.

“I’m losing control.” Qin Wentian had an extremely unsightly expression on his face. He had no way to steer the strength from his bloodline.

“How envious.” Fatty grinned. If an individual couldn’t control his bloodline, it only meant that the bloodline was exceedingly powerful. With Qin Wentian’s current level of cultivation, he had no way of controlling it.

“Since you can’t control it, just let it explode forth unhindered.” Fatty’s arrow pierced through the head of a demonic wolf that was in the midst of pouncing towards Qin Wentian.

“Right.” As the wolf’s blood splattered on Qin Wentian’s face, a glint of insanity appeared in his eyes. At that moment, he relinquished any semblance of control he might have had, fully unleashing his strength. His Bloodline Limit’s terrifying strength began to surge and seeth like a boiling ocean, causing Qin Wentian to emit an aura akin to that of a monarch, a monarch that was above the world.

“Kill.” Qin Wentian roared in rage, and at the same instance, the eyes of the demonic wolves revealed traces of reverence towards the blood-red corona of light that shrouded Qin Wentian’s body. After he unleashed the Dragon Subduing Fist, the heads of the three 3rd-level demonic wolves exploded with a single strike, painting the skies red in a shower of blood

“Howl.” A demonic wolf pounced at him, launching a sneak

attack from behind his back. These wolves excelled in speed and agility, and were endowed with immense strength. Although the combat ability of Qin Wentian and Fan Le was sufficient to deal with 4th-level demonic beasts, in front of such a huge pack of demonic wolves, they could only be passive and were unable to take the initiative to attack.

“Screw off.” Fan Le dashed towards Qin Wentian’s back, roaring with rage at the demonic wolf. For the first time, he released his second Astral Soul—a devilish, demonic face. The eyes of his manifestation were capable of captivating one’s heart and soul, and the demonic wolf that was initially pouncing on Qin Wentian stopped in its tracks, lying limply on the ground and staring at Fan Le’s manifestation in a daze. Meanwhile, Fan Le wasted no time, using an arrow as his weapon to pierce through the head of the demonic wolf.

At this moment, Qin Wentian had already dashed forward and displayed the techniques of his Dragon Subduing Fist. In a storm of scattering flesh and blood, he annihilated the wolf horde.

“Brother, kill the Wolf King!” Fan Le shouted, as he helped Qin Wentian to bring up the rear.

“Boom!” Using great force, Qin Wentian stomped on the ground, leaving deep cracks and lines on the earth. His body soared through the skies with the aid of his explosively jumping power, decimating the ranks of the wolves that were lunging at him with wild abandon. As he landed, an immense, fearsome strength generated in his body, and with his posture resembling a bent bow, Qin Wentian surged forward, sprinting madly.

“Awoooo.....” The Wolf King howled in anger. All the demonic wolves had forsaken Fan Le; instead, they concentrated on Qin Wentian.

“This fatty shall go all out.” An expression of hatred flashed on his face as Fan Le released both of his Astral Souls simultaneously. Emitting an incomparably resplendent astral light from the Astral Bow in his hands, he fired nine arrows at once. “Thud, thud.” The sounds of arrows meeting their mark rang out as the demonic wolves on Qin Wentian’s left and right were being shot dead. One shot, one kill.

At this moment, Fan Le and Qin Wentian had unleashed all their abilities. Countless arrows rained from the sky, burying into demonic wolves with unerring accuracy.

Orfon and the youth clad in beast skin, Makino, had their pupils contracted as they saw what happened in the distance, Qin Wentian was madly dashing over with a crazed look in his eyes. His bloodline ability was burning, imbuing him with a violent and domineering strength that greatly increased his combat ability.

“Orfon, you are at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm and possess two Astral Souls.” Makino said to Orfon, obviously telling Orfon to block Qin Wentian.

Orfon froze slightly, as he gritted his teeth. Abruptly releasing both of his Astral Souls, he manifested a spear-type Astral Soul as well as a shield-type Astral Soul. This time around, he didn’t dare

to underestimate his enemies, unlike during their earlier clash when he had not released his Shield-type Astral Soul and ended up injuring his hands because of the arrow shot by Fan Le.

Two Astral Soul, one for attack and another for defence.

The crazed Qin Wentian had already rushed over. Orfon roared as his Astral long spear wavered in the air, unleashing techniques of the Spear Arts of the Poisonous Dragon. This amplified his strength, while the Astral spear projected an image of a black dragon that flew over to Qin Wentian, seeking to devour him.

Orfon was at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, which meant that he had cleared two out of the nine main meridians inside his body. As such, he was able to unleash innate strength and generate fearsome might.

With a crazed look in his eyes, Qin Wentian unleashed his technique, Draconic Roar of the Nine Heavens, using absolute strength to break apart the manifestations. A terrifying roar, like that of a real dragon, sounded out and broke apart the projection.

“What tyrannical strength.” Orfon’s heart sank. From Qin Wentian’s recent strike, Orfon estimated that Qin Wentian had already far surpassed the strength level of 200 bulls, emitting a pressure akin to that of Mount Tai.

“Kill!” Orfon wielded his spear like a poisonous dragon, piercing through the empty space. He aimed directly for Qin Wentian’s eye.

However, Qin Wentian merely extended his left hand and easily caught hold of the spear. Although the impact caused his left hand to bleed profusely, his right hand formed into the shape of a fist, possessing formidable might as he smashed it towards Orfon.

“This guy is crazy.” Orfon’s expression underwent a drastic change. The Astral Energy surrounding him coalesced into an illusory shield that blazed with resplendent Astral Light. He intended on blocking the fist in front of him.

“Boom!” The illusory shield instantly broke apart, and the terrifying surge of impact caused Orfon’s body to be flung backwards into the air.

At this moment, the silhouettes of many other applicants appeared as they approached in this direction. That clash, the howls of the many demonic wolves, and the remnants of huge amounts of Astral Energy being unleashed attracted them to this point. At the same time, the sounds of galloping horses could be heard, causing the ground a distance away to tremble.

But at this moment, Qin Wentian and Fan Le could not afford to care about such inconsequential thing as their eyes became filled with killing intent. A huge amount of wolf carcass laid strewn all about underneath the shower of arrows. Fan Le mirrored Qin Wentian’s movements, and they both sprinted madly towards Orfon.

“Let us leave.” Riding on the Wolf King, Makino instantly retreated. Orfon cast a look of fear towards Qin Wentian as he hurriedly picked himself up from the ground and chased after

Makino's silhouette.

“F*ck his grandmother. The Astral Energy in my body is almost fully depleted.” Fan Le cursed in a low tone as the Astral Bow disappeared from his hands. However, like Qin Wentian, he chased after Orfon's figure, seeking to kill him.

Orfon coughed out a few mouthfuls of blood. With a pale countenance and eyes that revealed traces of desperation, he continued sprinting forwards.

Suddenly, several figures mounted on dragon horses appeared. These were the supervisors of the training exercise, as well as the powerful seniors from the various academies.

“Stop.” Sitting atop a dragon horse, Orchon rushed forward as he roared in rage, causing the pupils of Qin Wentian and Fan Le to contract.

Fan Le halted his steps, and the remaining Astral Energy in his body transformed into three Astral Arrows that flew after Orfon.

“How dare you.” A cold light flashed in Orchon's eyes, as the dragon horse he was riding sped forwards. The long spear in his hand glowed with Astral Light that exploded the Astral Arrows.

“You are courting death.” The long spear in Orchon's hand shot out, flying towards Fan Le.

Fan Le paled and leaped backwards. The long spear pierced through the ground, causing tremors of great magnitude. Although it missed Fan Le by a hair, the end of the spear vibrated, hitting Fan Le's and blowing him away.

“Fatty.” Qin Wentian's expression froze, as he halted his steps. In front of him was none other than Orchon, who was also glancing at him as he stated in a cold voice, “The purpose of the examinations was to hunt the demonic beasts. How dare both of you attempt to kill your fellow humans.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Orchon sent a fist towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian raised his hand to block, but the immense strength wasn't something that he was able to withstand. The impact caused Qin Wentian to skid backwards, agitating his blood and Qi. Blood seeping out of the corner of his mouths. The fury in his eyes was accompanied by an unprecedented level of killing intent.

This time, Orchon had planned to kill them while turning truths into lies, changing black into white.

“Both of you are too audacious.” A cold and clear voice drifted over. Mo Qingcheng, flew over on the back of the Demonic Crane and looked towards Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

Mo Qingcheng naturally recognized Qin Wentian, but she never would have thought that Qin Wentian would actually attempt to kill a fellow applicant during the examinations. If she knew that this would happen, she wouldn't have saved him earlier.

“Miss Mo, the two of them are truly impudent. Shall we execute them right here and now?” Orchon asked.

“I don’t wish to see humans killing each other. Release them, but there better not be a second time.” Mo Qingcheng sighed.

“Right.” Orchon nodded his head respectfully and turned to Qin Wentian, “I shall spare both of your cheap lives today. Scram.”

Qin Wentian’s Bloodline Limit gradually calmed down. An icy look filled his eyes as he swept his gaze towards Orchon and Mo Qingcheng. Surprisingly, he laughed coldly.

“All of you, very good.” Contained within Qin Wentian’s laughter was derision. He walked towards the injured Fan Le and asked, “Are you okay?”

“This fatty here has a life blessed by the Heavens. There’s no way I would die so easily.” Fan Le grinned, “Brother, it seems like beauty does not make a woman a goddess.”

“Let’s go.” Qin Wentian carried Fan Le on his back as they walked away, only to hear Qin Wentian grumbling, “Fatty, you are truly heavy.”

As she gazed at the two desolate-looking silhouettes, Mo Qingcheng’s intuition told her that something was wrong. Suddenly, a blur of white shadow flashed by. In front of her, the

blur appeared to be a snowy puppy.

“Why are you here?” Mo Qingcheng smiled, only to see the snowy puppy staring at her solemnly, before dashing away in Qin Wentian’s direction. The puppy’s actions caused Mo Qingcheng to freeze; that look on the puppy’s face seemed to be filled with a hint of coldness.

Soon after, the cries of an eagle resounded in the skies as Luo Huan appeared. Looking at Fan Le and Qin Wentian’ desolate silhouettes, she only said, “Mo Qingcheng, you went overboard this time.”

Mo Qingcheng looked at Luo Huan, a lack of comprehension reflecting in her eyes.

“His name is Qin Wentian, someone from the Qin Clan in the Sky Harmony City. He didn’t even know Orfon, so why would he want to kill him? On the contrary, there are many people plotting for the death of my Junior Brother Qin.” Luo Huan coldly swept her gaze towards Orchon. Mo Qingcheng trembled, as she recalled Qin Wentian the desolate-looking silhouette and the cold look the puppy flashed her.

Her heart suddenly felt an unknown sense of pain assailing it.

“Was I wrong...” As Mo Qingcheng gazed at the walking silhouette, an unbearable emotion caused her heart to tremble.

TL Note:

Orchon is Orfon's elder brother.

AGM 038 – Murderous Heart

Inside the Dark Forest, Qin Wentian carried Fan Le as he rapidly walked away. Although he was exhausted, he had no choice since they had to quickly leave this area before enemies located them again. The current Qin Wentian and Fan Le had no more strength to engage in battles.

“How unlucky.” Fan Le grumbled dejectedly, “Had I know this would be so dangerous, I would not have signed up for this. I’m still a virgin, you know?”

“Shut the f*ck up.” Qin Wentian cursed in a low tone. This fatty was really talkative.

“Hehe, how are you feeling now that your Bloodline Limit stopped seething?” Fan Le continued asking, “and what’s going on with this puppy? Why does it keep following us?”

“If you continue to be a chatterbox, I swear I’m going to leave you behind.” Qin Wentian was extremely fatigued. Earlier, both he and Fan Le had entered into a state of semi-madness, brought on when their Bloodline Limits seethed and surged. After that period of heightened combat ability, their body switched to a “recovery state”, causing them to enter a period of weakness. In addition, both of them had fully exhausted the Astral Energy in their body, which led to this extremely weakened state.

This was especially true for Fan Le. Even after expending all his strength, he was still hit by the tail-end of Orchon’s spear, causing

his head to bleed incessantly. Luckily, Qin Wentian was skilled in the acupuncture needle arts and managed to stop the bleeding. Even so, the current Fan Le was entirely devoid of strength.

Thinking of this, Fan Le muttered to himself, “If there’s a debt of hatred, it should be repaid as soon as possible. However, the genius me is still young. I would still need a few more years to cultivate. By then, it wouldn’t be too late for me to seek my revenge.”

“Qin Wentian, why is your cultivation level so low? If you were at the Arterial Circulation Realm, you would have easily defeated him earlier.” Fan Le continued grumbling.

“There’s a cave dwelling in front.” Qin Wentian directly ignored the chattering Fan Le and proceeded towards the cave dwelling. In their current condition, if they met a demonic beast now, it would mean their death.

As they entered, Qin Wentian gently let Fan Le down, as he too, collapsed on to the ground, drawing in huge breaths.

“Fatty, let’s recover our energy first. If we don’t, this place will become our burial ground once we encounter even a single demonic beast,” Qin Wentian stated. He then sat down cross-legged, entering a meditative state. Soon after, Fan Le agreed and mirrored Qin Wentian’s actions.

“Surely we won’t be so unlucky.” Right after he shut his eyes, Fan Le’s eyes snapped open, only to see a nearby demonic leopard staring at them

Qin Wentian's expression froze, and he stared at the demonic leopard before struggling to get up his feet.

“Buzz.” The demonic leopard's movements were fast and brutal. Similar to a burst of electricity, it appeared in front of them in an instant. At the same time, however, the body of the snowy puppy by Qin Wentian's side flickered, leaving behind afterimages with a speed even faster than that of the demonic leopard.

“Grrrrr.....” A low growl sounded out from the snowy dog, causing Qin Wentian to be thunderstruck. The body of the snowy puppy actually expanded a few times in size until it became roughly the size of a 3rd-level demonic wolf. The snowy puppy unhinged its canines and lunged forward, biting the throat of the demonic leopard.

In that instant, the body of the demonic leopard slumped to the ground. With its throat torn apart, it died shortly after.

“Transformation? It can do that?” Fan Le and Qin Wentian both stared at the snowy puppy, dumbstruck. What made them even more speechless was that after the snowy puppy scampered back towards the cave dwelling, it had a fawning expression on its face. That fawning expression, how they felt like beating it up..... The body of the puppy gradually reduced back to its original size, making the fawning expression even more adorable.

“This little fellow actually pretended to be a pig to eat a tiger. Let's call him Little Rascal.” Fan Le chortled.

“Low class.” Qin Wentian disdainfully glanced at Fan Le, “But then again, this name is quite fitting.”

After which, Qin Wentian also grinned. The poor, pitiful dog was named “Little Rascal” from then on.

Leaving ‘Little Rascal’ outside the cave to stand guard, Qin Wentian and Fan Le felt more reassured in their hearts. By the time night descended, their Astral Energy was fully recovered. Fan Le opened his eyes, only to hear crackling sounds emitting from within Qin Wentian’s body. Fan Li clicked in tongue in annoyance. Even he, the genius fatty, did not cause such a large commotion when he was cultivating.

But still, he has to admit that Qin Wentian was truly dedicated. Qin Wentian had immediately used techniques to refine his body as soon as he finished recovering.

Naturally, Fan Le knew very clearly that after experiencing today’s events, Qin Wentian had no choice but to hope that he could improve his cultivation base as soon as possible. He still had many enemies waiting for him.

“Orchon, Orfon, just wait for it.” Fan Le chortled with a wretched smile that was filled with hints of coldness. Standing up and patting his stomach, he walked towards the demonic leopard’s carcass. Now that they had recovered, it was time to eat.

After Qin Wentian opened his eyes, he saw Fan Le using his bare

hands to handle the flesh of the demonic leopard in an unrefined manner. Roasting the flesh and stuffing it into his mouth, Fan Le soon had his entire face covered in grease.

“You bumbling idiot, why do you have to be so attract so much attention after recovering your strength? Don’t you know the smell of roasted meat and the fire would attract other demonic beasts?” Qin Wentian scolded Fan Le in a low voice. Despite of their overexertion earlier in the morning, their strength had fully recovered during the span of half a day.

“We should hurry up and eat our fill before moving on.” Fan Le ate with gusto, so Qin Wentian began to eat as well. As they were eating, Little Rascal trotted over to their side and whimpered, directing its puppy-eyed look on Qin Wentian.

“How much can someone of your size eat?.” Qin Wentian tossed a piece of roasted demonic leopard meat over to Little Rascal, who happily chewed on it.

“Although demonic beasts normally absorbed the Yuan Qi of Heavens and Earth to aid their growth, this leopard meat is a great source of nourishment.” Fan Le explained as he ate. Qin Wentian agreed as well. He could feel that there was a source of energy within the demonic beast meat he had just eaten.

“We are truly going to enjoy eating all these good foods for the next coming month.” Soon after, Fan Le stood up and said, “There are more demonic beasts approaching. Let’s move.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian inclined his head in agreement as he beckoned Little Rascal before swiftly leaving the cave dwelling.

Upon finding another resting area, Fan Le immediately fell asleep while Qin Wentian cultivated, leaving Little Rascal to stand guard.

During the day, the three of them ventured deeper into the Dark Forest, where they hunted demonic beasts and enjoyed the taste of their flesh.

In the blink of an eye, it was already the 10th day since the applicants had started the training exercise. Now, all of them were deep inside the Dark Forest, where they had to be extremely careful.

In a forest region, there was a group of people slowly walking about. A fierce wind blew past as the expressions on their faces underwent a drastic change. At this moment, they saw an immense iron-armored rhino dashing over, tearing apart the ancient trees that were in its way.

“It’s a demonic beast that’s at the peak of the 3rd-level. A demonic beast that possess tyrannical strength, the iron-armored rhino!” The group of people shivered in their hearts. Although they wished to escape, it was to no avail as the rhino dashed in their direction.

What was even more surprising was that behind the iron-armored rhino, there were actually two youthful figures madly chasing after it with frightening intensity.

“Fatty, make your move.” A voice called out. The spectators only saw the flashes of Astral Arrows travelling in a beautiful arc, flying precisely towards the rhino as if the arrows had eyes attached to them. Nine arrows flew in rapid succession, sealing the path in front of the rhino and causing it to halt in its step. The second youth sped over, and with indiscernible movements, he struck forth with a fist of immense might, accompanied by a dragon’s roar.

“Boom.” The youth’s fist landed on the head of the rhino, releasing shockwaves that trembled the trees around it. The body of the rhino convulsed violently before slumping down to the ground, releasing its final death cry.

“What a domineering strength! Iron-armored rhinos are known for their defence, but this one was killed in a single strike.” The spectators’ hearts shivered, and soon after, they saw a snowy white puppy leap onto the shoulders of the slain rhino, showing a lewd expression on its face.

The youths were none other than Qin Wentian and Fan Le. When Fan Le walked out, he said to Qin Wentian, “How perverse. Your strength is even more tyrannical now that you’ve broken through to the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm.”

During the past ten days of cultivation, Qin Wentian had successfully stepped into the 9th level, which was also the last level for the Body Refinement Realm.

Currently, the clothes he wore were worn and tattered. He smiled when he looked to Fan Le, “Fatty, are you jealous?”

Qin Wentian used the tyrannical Astral Energy alongside the Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique in order to temper his body. With the boosting effect granted to him by the Heavenly Hammer Constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer, how could his strength not be terrifying?

“Me jealous of you? Are you able to control your Bloodline Limit with your will?” Fatty Fan Le put his hands on his hips and laughed at Qin Wentian, knocking Qin Wentian off his pedestal. Currently, Qin Wentian had no way to control nor steer the energy granted to him by his Bloodline Limit. Thus, its full power couldn’t be brought to full display, and it could only be contained within his body.

“Other than that Subduing Snake Fist, don’t you know any other technique?” Fan Le continued laughing.

“After I break through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, I will directly cultivate innate techniques. To me, the only critical thing now is to break through,” Qin Wentian replied. He would choose an innate technique that was suitable for him after successfully condensing his second Astral Soul.

“Right, quickly break through. That day, Orchon caused us to lose our face. I’m afraid if we don’t ignite our Bloodline Limit, even dealing with Orfon is going to be difficult.” Fan Le blinked his eyes as they continued walking.

Qin Wentian nodded his head. Previously, he was able to defeat Orfon, whose cultivation base was a realm higher than him, because he ignited his Bloodline Limit, immensely heightening his combat ability. If not for that, even though he was at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm currently, it would still be tough for him to defeat Orfon, who was at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

In another forest region in the Dark Forest, a group of flying beasts hovered in the air. Below them were Orfon, Makino, and two other figures.

“Orfon, that youth of the Qin Clan from the Sky Harmony City is only a Body Refinement Realm cultivator, yet you actually wanted me to deal with him?” One of the unknown figures looked at Orfon with a heavy sense of disdain in his eyes. After all, this person was a 2nd year senior of the Emperor Star Academy and had cleared four out of the nine main meridians inside his body. Not only was he at the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, he was also a member of an aristocratic clan.

Within the Dark Forest, although the nine martial academies were holding their examinations here, it was impossible for them to stop others from entering. Haku met Orfon by chance as he was training within the Dark Forest.

As for the other figure, he was Ye Zhan from the Ye Clan, a cultivator at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm as well as a member of the Royal Academy.

“That fellow still had a companion who possesses a Bloodline Limit. Both of them are extremely hard to deal with.” Orfon slightly narrowed his eyes. Qin Wentian also possessed a Bloodline Limit, but he didn’t want to let the others know of this. He had to ensure Qin Wentian’s death within the Dark Forest. Only then would he be able to rid himself of the humiliation from his defeat.

“Makino, make your move.” Orfon commanded. Makino’s gaze rested on the flying beasts hovering in the air, and soon after, each of the beasts flew off in the eight directions before disappearing without a trace.

AGM 039 – Persistent Tracking

Fan Le's cultivation was at the 1st level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, while Qin Wentian was only at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm. As long as they didn't venture deeper into the Dark Forest, and were cautious, it wouldn't be easy for them to get into dangerous situations.

Hence, this period of time was extremely leisurely for Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

“Qin Wentian, you should be able to enter the Arterial Circulation Realm very soon. What Astral Soul do you want to condense for your 2nd Astral Gate?” Fan Le asked as he walked beside Qin Wentian.

Fan Le was looking forward to which Astral Soul Qin Wentian would choose to condense, since his first Astral Soul already belonged to a layer higher than the 3rd Heavenly Layer. There were no doubts that his 2nd Astral Soul would be of a similar level as well. The strength of Qin Wentian's tyrannical Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul was something that he'd personally witnessed.

“I'm still thinking. There are countless constellations throughout the 9 layers of the Heaven. This time, I have to choose carefully.” Qin Wentian smiled. He too, was anticipating the condensation of his 2nd Astral Soul.

“You're abnormal.” Fan Le cursed in a low voice, “Many people's

will can only be sustained briefly in the 1st Heavenly Layer, and they have to hurriedly form innate links with the constellations. But you, even in the 3rd Heavenly Layer, still want to take your time to choose.”

“However, even though you’re abnormal, you’re still a distance away from me.” Fan Le spoke with a deadpanned expression on his face.

Qin Wentian was long used to the bragging of Fan Le. His only reaction was to smile disdainfully, as if he was trying to purposely infuriate Fan Le.

“There’s someone in combat.” Both of them said simultaneously, as they both dashed in the same direction, running as fast as if they were flying, while behind them, a small white blur of fur followed them.

Not far from Qin Wentian, Liu Yan began to despair. She hadn’t thought that she’d actually meet a 4th-level demonic beasts here — the fish-scaled python. In front of her, the python towered over her, wrapping itself over her friend Zufan, before swallowing him in a single gulp. The cruel ending frightened her so bad that her legs were trembling in fear.

“Liu Yan, run.” Liu Yue, who wasn’t far from her, madly roared. After all, Liu Yan was only 16 years of age, and upon seeing such a cruel situation, couldn’t help but break down in fear, staring dumbly at the green colored python as it neared, trembling madly.

The body of the python stopped in front of Liu Yan, as she stared up at it. At this moment, Liu Yan only felt crushing despair. She didn't hear the whistling sound that had emanated from the side.

“Evil creature.” Qin Wentian, like an arrow, shot forth from a bow, dashed towards the head area of the fish-scaled python, unleashed the 3rd strike of his Dragon Subduing Fist, Draconic Roars of the Nine Heavens, and brutally smashed his fist through the eyes of the python. The enraged python hissed and immediately slithered about as it angled its bite in the direction of Qin Wentian's body, trying to bite it.

“Peng!” The immense strength of Qin Wentian caused the head of the python to be knocked back as its tail swept towards Qin Wentian in a sweeping attack.

“Go.” Qin Wentian shouted to Liu Yan, who was still standing there, only to see his palm catch hold of the tail of the python, losing control of his movements, as the python swung its tail about.

Liu Yan had only come to her senses at this point, as she finally turned to her body, madly escaping, while the body of Qin Wentian was brutally smashed onto the trunk of a huge tree, causing his whole body to tremble in pain. However, the strength of his fleshy body currently was at an extremely high level. The strike earlier, though it was capable of making him feel pain, could not injure his inner organs.

A fearsome hiss, capable of piercing one's ear drums, echoed out, as an arrow of Fan Le pierced its other eye, before it decided to

slither away, not giving in to mindless rage, signifying that it was capable of logic and reasoning.

“How painful.” Qin Wentian didn’t chase after it, instead casting a glance at Fan Le, “Fatty, nice one.”

“Hehe.” Fan Le grinned, as he walked over. His 2nd Astral Soul granted him the ability ‘thought and intention’. He could impose his will on the arrow, and cause it to change direction in mid flight, as well as see the cultivation base of others just by looking at them. Although this type of Astral Souls wouldn’t be able to boost the user a great increment in attack or defence, it belonged to the control-type Astral Souls, which possessed a terrifying potential for growth.

Currently, Fan Le could only apply his power of thought onto arrows, causing them to change direction at the critical moment, enabling him to catch opponents unawares. After his powers grew, it could even evolve into telekinesis, enabling him to control other objects with the power of his mind.

“Are you okay?” Qin Wentian walked beside Liu Yan, as he extended his hand to her.

After seeing that the python had slithered away, Liu Yan finally heaved a sigh of relief as she slumped onto the ground. Her dreaded expression soon broke into a smile as she saw the grinning youth in front of her. She accepted the extended hand of Qin Wentian, allowing him to help her up.

“Thank you.” Liu Yan softly whispered. She was at the edge of desperation earlier, before Qin Wentian had appeared and saved her from certain death.

“It’s fine now, just be careful in the future.” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Right.” Liu Yan nodded her head and smiled, but soon after, her expression turned to hurt as she recalled that Zufan was dead.

Above the trees, a black-colored crow was attracted by the commotion of the battle earlier. As it flew over, it let out a cry.

“A black crow?” Fan Le cursed, before saying in a low voice, “they’re really persistent”

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows, as he instantly deduced what was happening. In the previous battles with Orfon, he didn’t forget that the youth to the side of Orfon was capable of controlling demonic beasts.

“Liu Yan, don’t reveal the fact that you know me.” Qin Wentian said to Liu Yan before glancing to Fan Le. Both of them instantly departed, dashing deeper into the Dark Forest.

This situation caused Liu Yan to be stunned. As she attempted to chase after Qin Wentian, abruptly, the sounds of wings flapping rang out as numerous flying beasts began to pursue the direction that Qin Wentian had gone. Not only that, she could see a number of cultivators standing on top of the flying beasts.

Upon seeing that, Liu Yue caught hold of Liu Yan as he stated, “Don’t chase after him, they’re about to face an extremely powerful opponent.”

“Brother.” Liu Yan gazed at Liu Yue, only to hear Liu Yue saying, “That Qin Wentian would rather suffer an attack from the python in order to save you, which means that he has taken a liking to you. However, these pursuers on top of the flying beasts are all extremely powerful. Remember the words of Qin Wentian — he’s a complete stranger to us.”

Just as the sound of his voice faded, a cultivator who was riding atop a 3rd-level demonic beast curved into a turn as he revealed himself. This person was none other than Ye Zhan.

Ye Zhan was full of smiles as he jumped down from his mount, walking towards Liu Yan and Liu Yue, “I’m Ye Zhan from the Royal Academy, and you guys are?”

“My name is Liu Yue, and this is my sister Liu Yan.” Liu Yue cautiously replied. Although Ye Zhan was courteous as he spoke, Liu Yue didn’t dare to be careless.

“That guy from earlier is named Qin Wentian, and is one of the applicants for the Emperor Star Academy. I’m afraid that he won’t be able to leave this Dark Forest alive. How long have you known him?” Ye Zhan nonchalantly asked.

“Not long at all.” Liu Yue smiled as he replied. He didn’t dare to

lie in front of Ye Zhan.

“There’s no need to be nervous, we’re only against him, and have no malicious intentions towards the both of you.” Ye Zhan reassured. Only then did Liu Yue heave a sigh of relief, while Liu Yan began to worry for Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were madly sprinting, however, how could they hope to outdistance the flying beasts? The distance between the prey and the predators was getting shorter.

“Little Rascal, transform.” Qin Wentian shouted, and abruptly, the body of the snowy puppy flickered as it expanded in size, while Qin Wentian and Fan Le both jumped onto it’s back, albeit a little squished.

“Sit tight. How many are pursuing us, and what’s their cultivation level?” Qin Wentian asked.

“Three people. Orfon and the youth clad in beast skin aren’t a problem, but the last one seems somewhat problematic. My power of thought is unable to see through his cultivation base, therefore I’m afraid that his cultivation level is at least at the 3rd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, or even higher.” Fan Le’s back was against Qin Wentian’s, and his legs tightened around the body of Little Rascal, as he wielded a bow in his hands, firing three arrows into the air.

The speed of evasion for the flying beasts was extremely quick. In addition to their rapid acceleration, the arrows fired by Fan Le

were unable to hit them in spite of him imbuing the power of his will into his arrows.

“How troublesome.” Fan Le sighed depressedly, “luckily, the speed of this Little Rascal is quick enough — on par with the flying beasts. If not for the two of us, this snowy puppy would have no need to use its transformation ability, and could easily evade the pursuit of the flying beasts.”

“Carrying on like this isn’t a solution. Let’s prepare to battle them. As long as we can kill the beast tamer, we will have more methods to control the flying beasts.” Qin Wentian stated.

“Right, let’s wait for a chance.” The two of them began their discussion. Fan Le, to preserve his Astral Energy, stopped the firing of his arrows as the three of them ventured deeper and deeper inside of the Dark Forest.

Haku was somewhat irritated, he hadn’t thought that it would consume so much energy just for them. Not only that, that white dog ran around randomly, as if it had no clear sense of direction in mind. Now even he himself didn’t know where he was, and there was a high probability of encountering dangerous demonic beasts in this part of the Dark Forest.

Suddenly, the presence of sunlight could be seen. There were no more canopies of trees, only a vast, spacious acre of land, and the possibility of moving forward. There was also an entrance into a valley filled with mist and fog.

“Mirage City.” Haku exclaimed, as his pupils narrowed. They’d actually arrived at the boundary of the Mirage City within the Dark Forest.

Qin Wentian and co also halted their steps. Inside of the misty valley, there was a city that was glimmering; it was partially visible one second, and was disappearing the next.

“It’s as though they’re very afraid of this place.” Fatty squinted his eyes, as he looked towards three of their pursuers, who had stopped and were slowly inching their way forward. It seemed like now, Qin Wentian would be unable to escape, even if he’d grown wings.

The two of them dismounted from the back of Little Rascal, as the snowy puppy transformed back into it’s original size.

Qin Wentian locked gazes with Fan Le, and as if they intuitively understood each other’s intentions, as soon as Fan Le took out his bow, he fired nine Astral Arrows into the skies, aiming for Makino.

“Little Rascal.” Qin Wentian hollered, only to see Little Rascal spring into the hands of Qin Wentian, as Qin Wentian flung Little Rascal up into the skies, towards Makino who was inching slowly forward in the air.

Makino’s countenance underwent a drastic change after he saw the nine Astral Arrows aiming for him. Abruptly, the space in which he could dodge, was all sealed off. Makino gathered his strength, as he lunged towards the astral arrows in front of him,

attempting to use brute strength to break free.

But in that same instance, a snowy white puppy appeared in front of him, transforming a few sizes bigger, as it's sharp claws swiped towards his head.

Makino's expression grew unsightly, as he controlled the black eagle he was on to rise in altitude. His actions caused the sharp claws of Little Rascal, that were originally aimed at him, to slice through the brains of black eagle, in turn causing it to plummet down from the skies. Makino too, lost his balance, and followed the black eagle down.

All of this happened in an instant. The nine Astral Arrows fired earlier were merely meant to be a bait to keep Makino in that position. The real attack was the claw swipe from Little Rascal. And in the instant that he'd paused to break apart the arrows, Makino had already fallen into the trap..

On the boundary of the misty valley, Fatty nocked an arrow and aimed towards Makino, who was falling in mid air, while grinning.

AGM 040 – Breaking Through To The Arterial Circulation Realm

Makino's heart sank to the bottom of a valley upon seeing the wretched smile on Fan Lie's visage. Even though he was at the Arterial Circulation Realm, he couldn't exert any strength while falling through the air, and could only look on helplessly at the arrows fired up into the sky.

“Thwish, thud.....” Makino did his best to block the arrows, but was unable to defend against the third, which embedded itself right in the middle of his brow. This time around, the price of pursuit was death.

At the same instance that Makino was struck, Haku leapt down from his black eagle, and sped over towards Fan Le.

Qin Wentian stepped out, brilliantly displaying the might of his Dragon Subduing Fist, and clashed directly with Haku.

“Kill.” Waves of intense killing intent flashed through Haku's eyes as he unleashed his own technique, Star Descending Fist. As Haku's fist swept towards him, Qin Wentian only felt an tyrannical immense energy gushing towards him and his countenance underwent a drastic change. Borrowing the power of the force to aid in his retreat, Qin Wentian abandoned any thoughts of clashing with Haku as the explosive impact caused his body to be flung backwards and collide with Fan Le.

Fan Le retreated several steps from the force of the impact, and

by chance, retreated inside the boundary of the misty valley.

“We can’t defeat him, what do we do?” Fan Le helped Qin Wentian up as he depressedly stated.

“Since we can’t defeat him, let’s escape.” Qin Wentian’s entire arm was in extreme pain. If it hadn’t been for his fast reaction, to retract his fist back in that instant, his entire arm would’ve been disabled.

Little Rascal understood the intentions in Qin Wentian’s heart, and it expanded in size. The two of them mounted it, and Little Rascal sped off towards the misty valley.

This scenario caused Haku to be stunned — could it be that they had no idea that Mirage City in the misty valley was a forbidden ground?

“Useless trash who don’t know that their courting death. They chose to kill Makino first, in order to stop the demonic beasts under his control from keeping tabs on them.” Orfon walked over. He couldn’t help but feel lucky in his heart, the co-operation between the two of them had been too flawless, not counting that beast that was capable of transformation. If it weren’t for them deciding that Makino was the greater threat, the first target marked for elimination would’ve been him.

But what a pity, they would surely die now. The Dark Forest, although extremely vast and spacious, still had some areas that were off limits. Mirage City inside the misty valley was one of

these forbidden places. Once one entered, they couldn't hope to be able to come out.

“The deed is done. As for Makino's death, deal with it yourself.” Haku turned away and departed, causing Orfon to gnash his teeth with apprehension. This matter was going to be slightly troublesome.

Inside the misty valley, Little Rascal was still dashing forward at top speed.

“There's no one chasing after us?” Fan Le's voice rang out.

“Yup.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Seems like there's something wrong... could it be that this place is extremely dangerous?” Fan Le's body trembled uncontrollably. Was that why they'd stopped being pursued?

“Maybe.”

“Will we die here?” Fan Le's voice was filled with the tone of sobbing.

Inside of Misty Valley, they couldn't be sure of which direction they had come from. They were actually lost.....

“The fatty me is still a virgin! Even if I have to die, I have to die

with a beautiful babe in my arms.” The fatty hugged Qin Wentian as he sobbed, while Qin Wentian’s reply was to raise his foot and kick straight at Fan Le’s buttocks.

After another hour, they finally walked out of the mist-filled area. The moment they stepped out, a shocking sight awaited them. In front of their eyes, was a castle..... Mirage City of the misty valley wasn’t a city, but was an actual castle instead.

However, not just that, but they could see many armored warriors within the Castle. The warriors were all equipped with black armor, and were filled with solemnity and a murderous presence. Upon seeing the two intruders, a troop of black-armored warriors began advancing towards them, pointing their spears at them, as their killing intent was released, which almost caused Fatty to trip over his feet as he scrambled backwards.

“The fatty me can’t be so unlucky right.” This time around, Fan Le really sobbed. These warriors were all at the Arterial Circulation Realm, and all of them had a higher cultivation base than him — there was no escape.

Qin Wentian had never thought that there would actually be a hidden castle inside the Dark Forest, and that there would be such a terrifying army.

The killing intent got stronger and stronger, and Qin Wentian and Fan Le both released their Astral Souls, preparing to escape even if there was no way to escape.

“Qin-Wen-Tian.” At this moment, from a fair distance away, a fully armored figure walked over, shouting the name of Qin Wentian. The voice was somewhat hoarse, as his face was covered by a helm that only revealed a pair of eyes.

“Huh?” The pupils of Qin Wentian contracted in confusion. In this remote place, there was actually someone who knew him?

“All of you, retreat.” That figure indifferently commanded, and only after the troops of the black-armored warriors had retreated, did Fan Le heave a sigh of relief.

“You are?” Qin Wentian curiously gazed at the figure.

“The Mirage City is a forbidden area. Those who enter, will never leave again. However, you are an exception. Come with me.” After saying that, the mysterious figure turned and walked towards the castle, as Qin Wentian and Fan Le followed close behind, bewildered.

The mysterious figure brought them to an extremely comfortable looking abode. There were even pretty girls who were serving as maids.

“Take good care of them.” The mysterious figure instructed, and he continued, “Qin Wentian, if you all wish to leave, just inform the maids, and I will arrange an escort to safely send you out. But remember this, you are not to divulge the location of the Mirage City. If you do so, I guarantee that the both of you won’t be able to survive past three days.”

“Most certainly.” Fatty grinned. The mysterious figure cast a glance at Qin Wentian and continued, “Since your cultivation base is at the 9th level of the Body Refinement Realm, it’s about time for you to try breaking through to the Arterial Circulation Realm.”

After he finished speaking, the mysterious figure left, leaving behind an extremely puzzled Qin Wentian.

“Who is he?” Fan Le asked, after the mysterious figure and the maids had left.

“How would I know?” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders. Even after searching all of his memories, he was still unable to guess as to the identity of the mysterious figure.

“Do you want to secretly escape?” Fan Le whispered, but the moment the words were out of his mouth, he instantly regretted it. Several pretty-looking maids were bringing dishes of delicacies over, causing the eyes of Fan Le to turn into saucers — how could he ever want to escape from such a heavenly place.

After the maids had placed all the food onto the table, they retreated to the side. Fan Le smiled and invited them over, “Beautiful sisters, let’s eat together.”

The beautiful maids all shook their heads, indicating that they didn’t dare to do so.

Fan Le felt that it was a pity, before looking at the food again as his belly growled with hunger.

“Leopard’s gut, bear’s heart, crimson snake fruit..... the food here is just too awesome.” Fan Le was shocked. However, this castle was located within the Dark Forest, and considering the strength they possessed, they indeed had a natural superiority when it comes to hunting.

What made Fan Le even more amazed however, was that shortly after, there were even people delivering Yuan Meteor Stones for Qin Wentian’s usage, saying that it was for his breakthrough to the Arterial Circulation Realm. Fan Le began suspecting that Qin Wentian was actually the young master of the castle.

Between buddies, the most important thing is the code of brotherhood. Fan Le righteously began splitting the Yuan Meteor Stones between them evenly, under the pretext that Qin Wentian wouldn’t be able to use all of them.

After seeing the Yuan Meteor Stones that were prepared for him, Qin Wentian understood that they had no ill intentions. After which, he began to cultivate quietly, in an attempt to breakthrough to the Arterial Circulation Realm.

As for Fan Le, he was on cloud nine — eating the free food, chatting with the beautiful ladies — the days passed at a leisurely pace. The food provided here were definitely comparable to that of the Royal Palace. Not only this, from his estimations, not many from the aristocratic clans would be able to afford such good conditions; eating high graded demonic beast’s meat daily would

immensely aid in cultivation.

Other than the excellent treatment, there was no one who came to bother them.

As the night darkened, Qin Wentian sat cross-leggedly on the ground. The mist that permeated the valley was incapable of blocking the starlight. At this moment, thunderous sounds of cracking and grinding could be heard from within Qin Wentian's body, as a corona of radiant Astral Light seemed to revolve around him.

“The fleshly body glowing with it's own light, while Astral Light nourishes the body... this is an indication of a peak Body Refinement Realm cultivation base.” Fan Le lazily laid down, as he look at the cultivating Qin Wentian. This fellow was really hard working — for the past few days, the only thing Qin Wentian had done was immerse himself in cultivating.

“Poof.” A crisp sound rang out, causing Fan Le to widen his eyes in surprise and stare at Qin Wentian, before curling his lips into a slight smile, “He's begun to prepare himself for breaking through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, and has opened up all of his acupuncture points.”

“The speed of this fellow's cultivation is just too frightening — didn't he just have a breakthrough a few days ago?” Fan Le murmured in his heart. Although there was external assistance such as eating the demonic beast's meat, as well as the Yuan Meteor Stones, the most important reason behind the speed of his breakthrough was the fact that his cultivation technique was

extremely overbearing, and that the tyrannical energy provided by a constellation from the 5th Heavenly Layer was extremely suitable for the refinement and tempering of the body.

The purpose of the Body Refinement Realm was to temper your flesh until you achieve a perfect body. Those with weak cultivation methods, and that relied on absorbing Astral Energy from low-level constellations, would have a low effect towards the refinement of their fleshy body. In contrast, if the cultivation method was of a high level, and the Astral Energy within the body was powerful enough, one would be able to achieve the perfect body within a much shorter period of time. Qin Wentian belonged to the latter group, possessing both an excellent cultivation technique, and a tyrannical Astral Soul.

The domineering Astral Energy from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation of the 5th Heavenly Layer continuously descended, and fell onto Qin Wentian body. Within his body, boundless Astral Energy circulated, as it gathered at his various acupuncture points frenziedly surging.

Within the human body, there were many energy channels and acupuncture points. In the Arterial Circulation Realm, one needed to completely “open up” their acupuncture points. Only then would one be able to store even more Astral Energy. After which, one had to use the gathered Astral Energy to “clear” the acupuncture points of debris and filth, before connecting the energy channels to the acupuncture points, forming a main, circular pathway, through one of the nine main meridians to the entire body whereby Astral Energy could flow freely.

And after the circulated pathway was fully completed, Astral Energy would flow unhindered throughout the four limbs, bone structure and energy channels, immensely improving one's attacking and defensive capabilities. Not only that, the Astral Energy Essence would then sink into the eyes and ears of the cultivator, immensely elevating one's senses.

Regardless of the fact of whether one was a Martial Cultivator or Stellar Martial Cultivator, both types was able to enter the Arterial Circulation Realm.

As each of his acupuncture points was cleared, the expression on Qin Wentian's face became increasingly more painful. Qin Wentian grit his teeth forcefully and persevered, as sounds of his ragged breathing could be heard.

Fan Le, at the side, was mumbling nonsensically. This fellow beside him was truly putting his life in the line. But even so, he wasn't worried, as a trace of a smile could be seen on the tip of his lips.

The look of contempt by Orchon and the crazed pursuit by Orfon, were deeply etched into his mind. Qin Wentian had to make his breakthrough as soon as possible, and condense his second Astral Soul in the shortest time possible.

And now, the deadline of the examination had arrived.

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In the morning, the applicants who had entered the Dark Forest, all walked out. The examiners and seniors from the nine martial academies were all waiting on the outskirts. As for those who'd survived this ordeal, they would officially become one of their members.

Janus, Mustang, were standing together. And beside them, was Orchon, Luo Huan, as well as Mo Qingcheng.

“Orfon is out.” Janus let out a laugh as he saw the figure of Orfon. In the future, Orfon would be one of his disciples as well.

The beautiful eyes of Luo Huan flashed with a worried expression. This Orfon had once made a move against Qin Wentian when they had been in the Dark Forest. Later on, although both she and Mo Qingcheng would closely monitor Orchon, there was no guarantee that Orfon wouldn't do something behind their backs and seek others for help to do something to Qin Wentian. After all, the applicants for the training exercise came from all over the country. Only those from the Royal Capital, especially the aristocratic clans, would be familiar with each other,.

Mo Qingcheng coldly glanced at Orfon, causing his countenance to stiffen, as he lowered his head, not daring to meet her eyes. In front of this woman, despite the fact that he wanted to steal more glances at her, he didn't dare to incline his head.

Mo Qingcheng was paying attention to the applicants who exited the Dark Forest. As for the happenings that day, she was riddled with guilt. On that day, when she saw Qin Wentian chasing after Orfon to kill him, she had jumped straight to conclusions and

deeply regretted the fact that she didn't spend the time to properly investigate the matter.

Soon after, the sun set, and the beautiful red rays of the sun set shone onto the trees of the Dark Forest. Qin Wentian was still not out yet, while 300+ applicants from the Emperor Star Academy had already safely exited.

When compared to the other martial academies, the passing rate for the Emperor Star Academy was the highest, despite having the least applicants.

“Orfon, what have you done to Qin Wentian?” Mo Qingcheng turned her gaze towards Orfon as she coldly asked.

“I have no idea, the Dark Forest was too vast. Maybe he died at the hands of demonic beasts.” Orfon replied in a panic.

An extremely stifling pressure was emitted from the body of Mo Qingcheng, as Orfon hid behind the back of Orchon, only to see Mo Qingcheng coldly continue stating, “If anything happened to him, I will hold you responsible. Just you wait.”

All of a sudden, Mo Qingcheng flew off on her demonic crane. Luo Huan, upon seeing the desolate looking backside of Mo Qingcheng, knew that Mo Qingcheng truly regretted her mistake, and didn't blame her at all.

Her gaze, filled with an icy air, mirrored that of Mo Qingcheng,

as it swept past Orchon and Orfon .

“Regarding this matter, I will leave no stones unturned.” Mustang felt regret in agreeing to the intentions of his esteemed teacher. After all, the current Qin Wentian was still a weak cultivator at the Body Refinement Realm. If anything truly happened to Qin Wentian, he would be unable to calm the unease in his heart.

AGM 041 – Divine Weapon Pavilion

In the blink of an eye, seven days had passed since the training exercise had been conducted in the Dark Forest by the nine martial academies. New students were enrolled, and the numbers of the martial academies swelled.

The Emperor Star Academy was no exception, however not all of them felt happy and excited about the matter. Luo Huan waited on the outskirts of the Dark Forest for an entire three days and three nights, but failed to see Qin Wentian. She returned to the Emperor Star Academy and currently was sitting on a grandstand, overlooking the training grounds and watching as the new students pitted themselves against each other, with a depressed feeling in her heart.

Every year, after the enrolment exercise was concluded, the Emperor Star Academy would commence a ranking competition that lasted for seven days to determine the ranking of each of the students. Not only did this affect the honor and prestige of the student, it also determined the number of resources that they could use. This was the best method to ignite their fighting spirits, and cause them to be motivated to become stronger. Only when there was competition, would there be motivation.

Today was the first day. And the one that was currently standing on the stage was Orfon. Among the new batch of applicants, Orfon could be considered one of the most outstanding ones, as he defeated his opponents with relative ease.

Upon witnessing this, traces of laughter flashed in Luo Huan's

eyes, but embedded within that laughter, was sadness, and a hint of extreme coldness.

She really did like that sunny youth from before, had he really died in the Dark Forest? Today, he should've been the one standing on the stage, and the person that shined the most brilliantly.

.....

At this moment, at the boundary of the Dark Forest, two youths and a little adorable puppy walked out.

“Ah, what fresh air.” Qin Wentian gazed upon the city in front of him, as he broke out into laughter. The current him, his features and aura, all had traces of perceptible differences if they were compared to before — even his eyes shone with a discernibly brighter glow.

The current him had already “opened up” all of his acupuncture points, which enabled him to store even greater amounts of Astral Energy. At the same time, his stellar meridians had been cleansed of impurities and transformed into a circular stellar pathway, which connected his energy channels with his inner organs throughout his entire body, creating an intricately connected network, forming a completed Arterial Circulation pathway.

The Body Refinement Realm emphasized on perfecting the fleshy body. Stepping into the Arterial Circulation Realm, opening up his acupuncture points, connecting his meridians and energy channels to transform into a circular pathway, had granted him heightened

senses, increased movement speed and agility, and had improved his entire fleshy body — equivalent to a total upgrade.

“The beauties of the Royal Capital, here I come.” Fatty closed his eyes, as a look of enjoyment floated onto his face as he deeply breathed in the fresh air.

“Swosh.....” Qin Wentian directly aimed a kick at Fatty, almost causing Fatty to fall down.

“Qin Wentian, you’re too overbearing.” Fatty had his hands on his hips, glaring at Qin Wentian imposingly. The air went out of Fatty like a punctured balloon just as Qin Wentian shifted his gaze onto him. Thinking of the beating that he’d endured during the time they’d spent inside Mirage City, after Qin Wentian broke through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, it only caused him to sigh helplessly as he cursed in a low tone, “You’re bullying this magnificent fatty too much.”

After that, Fatty strode ahead, as a slight smile broke out on Qin Wentian’s visage, and he followed. No matter how much he tried, it couldn’t be blamed on him that he was unable to get used to the wretched behaviour of Fatty. The last night, before they had left Mirage City, this Fatty had actually invited a beautiful maid into his room under the pretext of Qin Wentian inviting her to discuss about the matters of life.....

And this wasn’t all. Just as Qin Wentian had finished his cultivation and was about to go back, that beautiful sister (maid) had looked at him pitifully before asking, “Young Master Wentian, I heard that you were looking for me.”

That was about 3am in the morning, and after that, Qin Wentian had brutally beat Fatty up. He could do whatever he wanted, as long as he didn't drag Qin Wentian's name into it.

But still, as he thought of his experiences in Mirage City, he couldn't help but be filled with a sense of curiosity. Who was the person who'd known him? Not only did he not kill them, the mysterious figure had greatly aided him instead.

And as they neared the City entrance, and as Qin Wentian prepared to enter the city, he noticed a familiar silhouette standing near the city gate. This person was none other than Francis.

"Master." Francis respectfully greeted Qin Wentian, and his eyes lit up, as he slightly ran forward.

Looking at the dirty robes of Francis, Qin Wentian felt a warm feeling in his heart. Never had he thought that Francis would have waited out here for him for so long.

"Why are you waiting here?" Qin Wentian asked.

"Hehe, I was already here seven days ago. However, I failed to see you among the crowd of returning applicants, so I asked your senior sister about your whereabouts. Your senior sister waited for three additional days before she departed. I had nothing to do, so I continue to wait here. In any case, if you had desired to return to the city, this was a place that you would have to pass by." Francis smiled tiredly.

“Oh yeah, Master, I’ve already found a resting place for us.” Francis continued smiling, as if he’d thought of something joyful.

“Let’s talk while we walk.” Qin Wentian stated.

“Okay.” Francis nodded his head, and began to explain to Qin Wentian, “Among all of the great powers in the Royal Capital, there’s one that’s extremely strong – The Divine Weapon Pavilion. The power they wield is almost incomparable to the others, and their purpose has mainly been to buy and sell Divine Weapons and other treasures. There’s a saying out there that, as long as you want to buy something, and are willing to part with a sufficient price, that the Divine Weapon Pavilion will definitely have it. Not only that, there are many types of Divine Weapons sold there. Hence, there are plenty of weaponsmiths and master forgers that are staying there under the capacity of invited guests, forging and refining the weapons there for them.”

“However, they are different from the Star River Association. They don’t accept missions, and merely engage in the buying and selling of treasures. And right now, I’m a guest staying over at the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

“Not bad. For you to help the Divine Weapon Pavilion forge and refine weapons, what compensation did they give you?” Qin Wentian continued asking.

“There are different levels of guests, and the level of treatment and remuneration directly correspond with the level one is at. For

example, those who join the Pavilion as a Martial cultivator will be able receive a monthly stipend of a fixed amount of Yuan Stones and Yuan Meteor Stones. As for high level guests, the treatment they received was exceedingly good — the level of treatment has even exceeded that of the Star River Association.” Francis continued.

A look of contemplation was on Qin Wentian’s face. Francis’s choice to be a guest at the Divine Weapon Pavilion was an excellent one. He could craft and forge weapons, while practicing his craft, while at the same time getting many other benefits. And in the future, no matter what he wanted, it would be much more convenient. For example, getting Yuan Meteor Stones for cultivation through Francis’s current connections.

“Francis, if you have a 2nd-level divine imprint, would you be able to forge a 2nd-level divine weapon?”

“The insights behind 2nd-level divine imprints are exceedingly difficult to comprehend, and it’s basically impossible for one to succeed on their first try. Only through countless experiments would one be able to carve the basic outline of the 2nd-level divine imprint. But still, I’m confident that if I had a 2nd-level divine imprint to study from, I would be able to completely forge a 2nd-level divine weapon.

“Great, let’s go to the Divine Weapon Pavilion. The divine imprint will be engraved by me. This time around, let’s co-operate to forge a weapon. And after that, try to see if you are able to exchange it for Yuan Meteor Stones for me.” Qin Wentian pondered over his decision, although he had already broken

through to the Arterial Circulation Realm, he had not opened his 2nd Astral Gate yet. In order to do that, he would require vast amounts of Astral Energy aiding him. For the past few days, he had been trying to open his 2nd Astral Gate, but it had been to no avail. Seems like he would still require the help from the Yuan Meteor Stones.

Not only that, as for the tiny astral-being inside his sea of consciousness, they would also require an immense amount of Astral Energy to be activated. It merely depending on the Astral Energy within his body, the speed at which he absorbed the Astral Light from his constellation to replenish, would be too slow.

“If we really managed to completely forge a 2nd-level divine weapon, Yuan Meteor Stones are definitely not a problem.” Francis exhibited an expression of joy on his face. The Royal Capital was densely populated, and there were many requests and hopes for the cultivators for divine weapons. Especially the risk-takers, possessing a divine weapon could mean the difference between life and death.

“Why didn’t we see anyone using divine weapons when we were inside the Dark Forest?” Qin Wentian curiously asked Fan Le.

From earlier, Fan Le had been listening at the sight, inwardly cursing in his heart. This abnormal guy still had actually comprehended divine imprints. Divine imprints are exceedingly mysterious and unfathomable, and would require vast amounts of time to study them and thus, majority of cultivators wasn’t willing to spend their time on it.

“How can applicants of examinations be allowed to bring divine weapons with them. Are you treating the examiners as fools?” Fatty snorted.

“Oh yeah, you are right.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders as he smiled. Now that he was out on the streets, he could see that almost everyone had a divine weapon with them.

The Divine Weapon Pavilion was located within the 4th sector of the Royal Capital, along with the major clans and the Star River Association. The pavement was spacious, and the buildings were majestic — those who were on the street were all people who possessed a certain amount of authority and background.

“That’s the Divine Weapon Pavilion.” Francis pointed to an enormous-looking majestic building, where crowds of people were continuously leaving and entering. This was the most popular place where those with power and authority would frequent.

“Master, do you want to take a look inside?” Francis respectfully asked.

“There’s no need, just bring me to the place where you forge weapons.” Qin Wentian replied. He wished to open his Astral Gate earlier, and condense his 2nd Astral Soul before entering the Emperor Star Academy to offer his “thanks” to the various people like Orfon who had given him the “welcoming” treatment during his time inside the Dark Forest.

Since they wanted him dead so much, he would show them the

opposite. He had to enter the Emperor Star Academy.

Of course, before that, he had to condense his 2nd Astral Soul and increase his combat ability. After all, the Emperor Star Academy was a place where geniuses were as common as clouds.

Francis led Qin Wentian onwards, and passed through the Divine Weapon Pavilion, towards the inner courtyard. The prosperity and success of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, was entirely supported and sustained by the inner-workings of this particular inner courtyard.

And similar to the Star River Association, as a guest of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, Francis not only had his own weapon-forging hall, he even had two apprentices helping him forge weapons. Stored in here, was a plethora of materials and embryonic casts. Not only that, the temperature of the smelting furnace could be adjusted at will, and the environment provided here did not lose out in any way to the one at the Star River Association.

“Master, what type of divine weapon do you want to forge?” Francis asked, as he walked towards the place where the embryonic casts are stored.

“You make the decision, you’re most adept at selection. I will prepare myself to comprehend the insights of the 2nd-level divine imprints, as the type of divine weapon forged doesn’t matter to me. As long as the forging process has no errors, we should be able to forge a complete 2nd-level divine weapon after I inscribe the divine imprints on to it.”

“If that’s the case, how about forging a bow?” Fan Le at the side, felt an unbearable itch in his heart as he interjected.”

Qin Wentian rolled his eyes and ignored Fan Le. Among the plethora of divine weapons, divine bows were amongst the hardest to forge. The degree of the curve... the length of the bow... even the mysterious runic lines of divine imprints were the hardest to inscribe upon a bow.

In the end, Francis chosen a sword-type embryonic cast, and prepared to forge a divine sword. He carefully selected the materials, before feeding them into the forge fire. Qin Wentian quietly sat by the side, attempting to comprehend the various complicated 2nd-level divine imprints that were in his memories, as he carefully analysed every trace of runic lines as he practiced drawing them out, using the Astral Energy within his Stellar Meridians.

AGM 042 – Remuneration

The main hall of the Divine Weapon Pavilion exuded a majestic atmosphere. Gorgeous colored glass decorated the many major booths, where treasures and different kinds and grades of Divine Weapons were displayed.

The area within the Divine Weapon Pavilion was extremely spacious and had a total of three levels. On average, there would be at least a few tens of thousands of customers venturing in and out daily.

At this moment, there was a young man decked in white robes outside the main hall of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, preparing to enter. His hands held wine cask, and the smell of alcohol was emitted from his body.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, you are here looking for treasures again? Come and take a look!”

“Immortal Drunken Wine, come, come. Let me see if there’s still any alcohol remaining in your wine cask.”

As the youthful-looking man stepped inside the Divine Weapon Pavilion, there were many who called out to him with smiles on their faces and exchanged jokes. By the looks of it, he was a frequent customer.

“Come find me again when there’s someone willing to treat me to alcohol.” The youth displayed hints of a smile before ascending to

the second level.

Laughter erupted around the crowd, as many people silently sighed. Young and polite talents such as Immortal Drunken Wine were too rare nowadays.

One of the Royal Capital's ten prodigies, the extremely talented Immortal Drunken Wine was known for his famous swordplay. Although the moments when he unleashed his sword were infrequent, there was none in the Royal Capital who did not know of him.

It was said that Immortal Drunken Wine's sword techniques were as good as his capacity for alcohol. Legend has it that someone had once witnessed him executing his beautiful swordplay in an exquisite dance while drunk. Henceforth, he was known as Immortal Drunken Wine. As for his true name, almost no one remembered it.

Immortal Drunken Wine, other than being extraordinarily talented with swords, had another hobby: collecting precious swords. And thus, he frequently visited the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

On the second level of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, Immortal Drunken Wine headed directly for the area that sold swords, walking towards a wall adorned with countless swords.

“Do you want to take a look at some of our new stocks?” The beautiful server standing in front of the sword wall smiled politely

at Immortal Drunken Wine before passing a few of the swords from the sword wall over to him. “These are all the newly forged divine swords of the 2nd-level. They are all mid and top grade divine weapons.”

Immortal Drunken Wine inspected each of the divine weapons carefully before shaking his head and smiling, “I will come back next time.”

The lady server, as though she was used to such a reaction, had no other expression other than lightly nodding her head. At this moment, a sword-youth approached her with three recently forged swords, “Sister Sword-Dance, these three were just forged not long ago.”

“Right.” Sister Sword-Dance inspected the swords, sinking her Yuan Energy into the blades. Glancing at Immortal Drunken Wine, she stated, “These three swords are all considered 2nd-level, but they are inferior to the swords you inspected earlier.”

“Let me take a look.” Immortal Drunken Wine drank a gulp of alcohol as he held the three swords in his hands, trying them out one by one. Unsatisfied, he finally shook his head. Immortal Drunken Wine pointed randomly at a common-looking sword on the left side of the sword wall and asked, “How much are you selling for this sword?”

“2nd-level low graded divine sword. If you want it, the selling price would be a Yuan Meteor Stone that hails from the 2nd Heavenly Layer.” Sword-Dance smiled. The 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stone she was talking about naturally referred to a Yuan Meteor

Stone that had met the standard specification.

Yuan Meteor Stones, other than being able to be used for condensing of Astral Souls, were also accepted as a form of currency for precious and valuable goods. Yuan Meteor Stones originated from the various Heavenly Layers, and when they fell down from the heavens, their size and shape were all irregular. Before full-sized Yuan Meteor Stones were cut and refined, they were known as Astral Ores. It was only after being processed into the shape and size that met the standard specification that Astral Ores could become Yuan Meteor Stones, which the public was familiar with.

Ordinary Yuan Stones that contained the Yuan Energy of Heaven and Earth were also considered to be a form of currency for low-grade goods. Those who came to the Divine Weapon Pavilion were all from wealthy and powerful backgrounds, so every time there was a transaction, they would naturally use only Yuan Meteor Stones.

“Okay, I want it.” Immortal Drunken Wine smiled. He then directly retrieved the sword before passing the Yuan Meteor Stone to the female server, who became stunned. Sword-Dance had thought that Immortal Drunken Wine was just asking casually, and as such, she randomly threw out a price. A 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stone was definitely not a low price, but to think that Immortal Drunk wouldn’t even react when paying the price she requested. As he snatched the sword away, Sword-Dance’s heart became heavy with unease.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, what bargain did you just made? Let

me have a look.” At this moment, a middle-aged man walked over. He was none other than the elder in charge of administration for the Divine Weapon Pavilion’s second level.

“Old Chen, take a look at this.” Immortal Drunken Wine passed the sword over to the Administrative Elder, Yang Chen.

Yang Chen held the sword and infused the Yuan Energy within his body into the sword. Gradually, his stern-looking visage transformed into amazement as he looked towards Sword-Dance and asked, “Who was the one that delivered this sword?”

“Grandmaster Francis, a guest of our pavilion, wanted me to deliver the sword here for sale. He is in desperate need of Yuan Meteor Stones,” the sword-apprentice respectfully replied.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, consider this our loss.” Yang Chen glared at Sword-Dance before turning to leave, directly seeking Francis.

“I’ll go with you.” Immortal Drunken Wine exclaimed. Drinking from his cask, he followed Yang Chen to the place where Francis was staying: the backyard of the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

Naturally, Francis did not expect Yang Chen to pay him a personal visit. After all, Yang Chen’s status as an Administrative Elder far exceeded Francis’s status.

“Francis, was this sword’s divine imprint engraved by you?”

Yang Cheng raised a finger and pointed it at the sword in Immortal Drunken Wine's hand.

Francis's eyes flickered as he replied, "The divine imprint was inscribed by my Master."

"Could I meet your esteemed Master?" Yang Cheng smiled.

"Let me check with him." Francis answered. He walked back into the Weapon Forging Hall, seeking for Qin Wentian's opinion. Shortly after, Yang Cheng saw two youths walking out, causing him to be thunderstruck.

"Elder Yang Cheng, this is my esteemed Master, Qin Wentian." Francis introduced.

"Excellent, geniuses indeed come from a young age. Grandmaster Qin, this lowly one is Yang Cheng. Shall we change location to a more pleasant place before we chat?" Yang Cheng gazed at Qin Wentian, who agreed. He had not thought that his divine imprint would cause an Administrative Elder to seek him out personally. From this, Qin Wentian could deduced that the divine imprint he inscribed had an extraordinary price.

The group of people walked towards a lakeside pavilion inside an inner courtyard, which depicted a beautiful scenery.

"Immortal Drunken Wine, why are you still here?" Yang Chen stared at Immortal Drunken Wine, who was standing beside him.

“I consider those who can forge a weapon that I love as my friends. The reason why I’m here was simply to make a new friend.” The smell of alcohol floated over from Immortal Drunken Wine’s body as he replied.

“Wanna drink a mouthful?” Immortal Drunken Wine gestured to his wine cask while looking towards Qin Wentian.

“This fellow is marvelous.” Qin Wentian smiled, but he politely declined.

“Grandmaster Qin, as for this divine imprint, there are still some flaws.” Yang Chen looked at Qin Wentian, beginning to talk official business.

“They are not flaws. I have not yet managed to completely comprehend the insights, so they give off a sensation of flawed runic lines.” Qin Wentian tactfully answered.

“Would you be willing to sell this divine imprint to my Divine Weapon Pavilion? You can state whatever price you want.” Yang Chen finally revealed his hand. Qin Wentian cast a glance at him before smiling and shaking his head. If he sold the divine imprint, Yang Cheng would spread his divine imprint to all the weaponsmith in the Divine Weapon Pavilion. If that occurred, wouldn’t the divine imprint be no different from scrap paper?

“Since this is the case, would esteemed Grandmaster Qin be willing to become a guest of my Divine Weapon Pavilion? I can

grant you special rights and treatment.” Yang Chen added.

“I don’t have the time to stay here in the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Francis’s presence here will be as long as mine.” Qin Wentian replied as he looked at Yang Chen, who furrowed his brows in worry. Before Yang Chen could respond, Qin Wentian stated, “If Elder Yang has nothing else for me, I will take my leave first:”

“Grandmaster Qin, please wait.” Yang Chen stopped Qin Wentian and retrieved a few Yuan Meteor Stones. Astral Light shimmered brilliantly, indicating that there was immense amounts of energy contained within them. The Yuan Meteor Stones were all from the 2nd Heavenly Layer.

“Grandmaster Qin, please do not be in such a hurry to reject. This could be considered the price for that divine sword you forged earlier.” Yang Chen pointed to the sword in Immortal Drunken Wine’s hand as he said this politely. Qin Wentian, upon seeing the Yuan Meteor Stones, was slightly tempted, but yet he still held back. People from the Divine Weapon Pavilion were wealthy indeed. Thinking back to his Qin Clan, they did not even have a single Yuan Meteor Stone left inside their vaults.

The Qin Clan was truly too poor; their remaining resources were continuously being drained.

Fan Le, who was standing beside Qin Wentian, felt his eyes light up in greed. They were going to be rich!

“In the future, could the the divine weapons forged by Grandmaster Qin be brought over to the Divine Weapon Pavilion for sale? The proceeds will be split 50-50, half of it going to Grandmaster Qin. And of course, the materials needed would all be provided by my Divine Weapon Pavilion. Moreover, if Grandmaster Qin is unwilling to remain here as a guest, I could elevate Francis’s status to a higher level, allowing him to enjoy the benefits and resources of our Divine Weapon Pavilion.”

Qin Wentian was finally moved by Yang Chen’s words. The difference between the price he personally sold the weapons for and the price for which he sold his divine weapons to the Divine Weapon Pavilion before being resold was like the distance between Heaven and Earth. Using the Divine Weapon Pavilion as a platform was the right choice to make.

And moreover, the materials needed to forge a weapon would be provided by them. This request to cooperated indicated their level of sincerity.

“I can’t guarantee that I would be able to forge divine weapons often.” Qin Wentian looked towards Yang Chen.

“The rarer something is, the more expensive it would be. For Grandmaster Qin’s masterpieces, we will sell them using the auction method. And of course, we would not dare to impose a monthly quota of divine weapons on Grandmaster Qin. It shall be as your heart desires.” Yang Cheng further elaborated on the offer.

“I agree.” Qin Wentian’s face broke into a youthful smile, causing Yang Chen to be slightly stunned.

“Since this is the case, I shall not be polite regarding the matter of these Yuan Meteor Stones.” Qin Wentian’s eyes shone as he kept the Yuan Meteor Stones that Yang Chen had taken out.

“Boss, how about me?” With flickering, Fatty stared at Qin Wentian, repeatedly calling him “boss”.

Qin Wentian glanced disdainfully at Fatty, but eventually, he passed a Yuan Meteor Stone over to him. Although Fatty continued staring at the other Yuan Meteor Stones in Qin Wentian’s hand, Qin Wentian ignored his pitiful looks.

“Haha, Grandmaster Qin, if you are free in the future, please visit the Divine Weapon Pavilion often. I will get my men to arrange living quarters and a better Weapon Forging Hall for Francis. If you need any help, Grandmaster Qin, feel free to look for me!” Yang Chen rose with a smile. This two fellows were just too interesting.

“Noted.” Qin Wentian smiled and bid farewell to Yang Chen. Immortal Drunken Wine glance at Qin Wentian and smiled, “If you’re ever looking for a drinking buddy, remember to look for me.”

After Yang Chen and Immortal Drunken Wine left, Qin Wentian stared at the Yuan Meteor Stones in his hands. His lips curled into a smile, knowing that he finally had enough Yuan Meteor Stones to open his Astral Gate.

“Grandpa Qin, Father, wait for me.” Qin Wentian silently vowed in his heart. He had never forgotten the fact that both his Grandpa and Father were currently being imprisoned.

AGM 043 – Qin Heavenly Divine Sect

Yang Chen quickly made good of his promise by elevating Francis's guest ranking and bestowing him with even better facilities, including courtyard with a good scenic view, a pavilion by lakeside, a refined and elegant abode, and a forging hall with even better resources and materials. Not only that, Yang Chen was extremely considerate and even sent a few maids over to take care of Francis's needs. Francis naturally knew that the reason behind all this was because of Qin Wentian. It was only because of Qin Wentian that he could be able to enjoy such preferential treatment.

In the beginning, Francis was still somewhat doubtful about the treatment he received from Yang Chen. But after Qin Wentian passed the 2nd-level divine imprint over to him for his reference and study, he realised that the 2nd-level divine imprint did indeed have the qualifications to command such a staggering price. Yang Chen's preferential treatment was only to be expected.

Qin Wentian and Francis cooperated and forged a few more divine weapons. Among them, they specially crafted a set of 2nd-level divine equipment set for Fan Le: an arm-guard and a hidden spring-loaded arrow that could be concealed within the arm-guard. The two equipments were made from materials that were extremely light, so when Fan Le equipped them, he felt as comfortable as if he were wearing clothes.

This was crafted in consideration of Fan Le's weaknesses in close combat. Upon receiving the equipment, Fan Le went crazy with excitement as he silently said to himself that he should just hang about with this weaponsmith since there would be no shortage of

treasure and riches. Hence, he started to be more affectionate when greeting Qin Wentian, always referring him as “Boss” or “dear boss” during every single encounter.

After settling everything, Qin Wentian was prepared to open his 2nd Astral Gate. During the night, as the starlight from the nine Astral Rivers cascaded downwards, Qin Wentian bathed himself in that starry radiance and started absorbing the Astral Qi from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer.

Both of his hands held Yuan Meteor Stones. Simultaneously, the surging Astral Energy contained within flowed into and travel along his Stellar Meridians, transforming into a terrifying Astral Energy Spiral before gushing forth in the direction of the 2nd Astral Gate and embedding itself in his sea of consciousness. All humans would naturally be born with an Astral Gate. The 2nd Astral Gate would appear only after stepping into the Arterial Circulation Realm. To open the 2nd Astral Gate, one must flow an extraordinary amount of Astral Energy along the circular pathway of their connected meridians. Flooding the meridians would stimulate the 2nd Astral Gate into opening.

This process would require a staggering and astounding amount of Astral Energy to work, which was why cultivation resources were so important. Thus, cultivators of famous academies or rich and powerful clans had an overwhelming advantage because of the resources they were entitled to.

Qin Wentian’s sea of consciousness was currently shuddering excessively, as he endured the piercing agony. Cultivation was originally something that was meant to be filled with suffering and

pain. Only after tempering oneself would a person be able to obtain strength, and as for cultivators without a strong will or iron-like determination, there was no way for them to embark upon the pathway of becoming a truly strong existence.

Fatty went off to research and experiment with his newly crafted concealed arrows, while Francis immersed himself in trying to comprehend the insights from the 2nd-level divine imprint. Only Little Rascal remained beside Qin Wentian. The night was as still as water. Suddenly, a corona of radiance enveloped Qin Wentian. As he persistently attempted to open his 2nd Astral Gate, the Astral Energy contained within the two Yuan Meteor Stones in his hands became almost fully depleted.

As dawn finally approached, a thunderous sound emitted from his sea of consciousness, signifying that his 2nd Astral Gate had successfully sprung into existence. Just as his body slumped to the ground, traces of a smile could be seen on his lips. He had finally opened his 2nd Astral Gate; the next step would naturally be the condensation of his 2nd Astral Soul, which would not be a huge problem to him, considering his extraordinary sensory abilities and affinity. “I have completely exhausted the Astral Energy within two 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones. Ai, cultivation truly does consume resources.” Qin Wentian murmured. Little Rascal pounced on him and stuck out its tongue, looking extremely adorable.

“Little Rascal, we will soon be meeting your favourite Senior Sister Luo Huan.” Qin Wentian patted Little Rascal on its head with a smile on his face. He couldn’t wait to step into the Emperor Star Academy.

Was Senior Sister Luo Huan doing well?

As for Orfon, Qin Wentian still had yet to repay him for the “welcoming treatment” he received.

In his mind, another enchanting visage sprang up. It was none other than the number one beauty of the Chu Country, Mo Qingcheng. All males would have feelings of goodwill towards beautiful girls, and he was no exception. But as the memory of their last encounter appeared in his mind, all the previous goodwill he felt had vanished into nothingness.

During the day, Qin Wentian practiced the innate portion from the Dragon Subduing Fist Manual. The portion containing the Dragon Subduing Fist Manual’s ordinary methods consisted of three strikes. In the innate portion, there was an innate art that would enable the user to transform into a raging dragon, brutal and domineering. Exuding a majestic aura and possessing extreme tyrannical strength, the user would be capable of dominating everyone under the heavens.

And during the night, Qin Wentian began the process of condensing his second Astral Soul. However, he had no intentions of condensing his Astral Soul right away. Instead, he first chose to observe, taking his time to consider. The countless constellations in the vast starry skies were all incomparably resplendent. Unlimited amounts of Astral Light interweaved and formed a complex picture, set in the backdrop of the starry skies.

Qin Wentian’s sensory awareness had easily soared through the 2nd Heavenly Layer. At the 3rd Heavenly Layer, he felt a slight bit of pressure. At the 4th Heavenly Layer, the pressure intensified,

and at the 5th Heavenly Layer, his head began to pound with pain. One constellation after another, Qin Wentian took his time to contemplate and sense the fluctuation released by each constellation. Persistent, he forcibly endured the pain and lengthened the duration that he could remain connected to the 5th Heavenly Layer.

After a few days, Qin Wentian gradually became accustomed to the pain as the length of his stay in the 5th Heavenly Layer became longer and longer.

During a certain night, nine silvery needles were inserted into the nine major acupuncture points around his head, sealing his six senses so that his heart could remain as calm as still water. Very quickly, he envisioned a pathway formed by Astral Light, which his senses used to travel, reaching out to the Astral Rivers.

At this moment, Qin Wentian did not halt at the initial Heavenly Layers and directly ascended to the 5th Layer of Heaven. The immense pressure caused him to be stifled and breathless, as if his head was about to crumble to pieces. He knew that the current him still did not possess sufficient qualification to form an innate link with the constellations from the 6th Heavenly Layer and could only remain on the 5th Heavenly Layer.

Demonic Ape Constellation; those who condensed a Demonic Ape Astral Soul would be able to gain terrifying boosts to their attack and defence.

Lightning Revenant Constellation; those who condensed an Astral Soul from it would be able to wield the power of lightning.

Qin Wentian's senses formed an Astral Projection of him, which

floated among the stars. He saw a constellation in the shape of a Giant with arcs of lightning and thunder sparkling around it, causing him to consider condensing this particular constellation. As long as he formed an innate link with this particular constellation, the Astral Energy he would absorb from this constellation would be imbued with a lightning element, which would be extremely beneficial for tempering his body.

The higher the layer a constellation belonged to, the more terrifying the Astral Energy within them would be. Not only that, they would usually possess unusual and extraordinary effects as well.

Resisting the temptation, Qin Wentian's Astral Projection temporarily ignored the Lightning Revenant Constellation, as he continued exploring the Astral Space. Suddenly, he sensed another abnormal constellation in the shape of a sleeping human. With just a single glance at it, drowsiness began to invade Qin Wentian's mind. His consciousness began to flicker, his senses no longer under his control.

“Dream Cast Constellation.”

Involuntarily, Qin Wentian entered into a dream state as his senses formed an innate link with the Dream Cast Constellation. In the dream, he was floating about in the starry skies and absorbing the Qi from the Dream Cast Constellation, forming an unbreakable innate bond between them.

The dream lasted for a long duration, but to Qin Wentian, it wasn't a dream, but rather a reality.

While in his dream-like state, he began to retrieve even more Yuan Meteor Stones as he activated the tiny Astral-Being in his sea of consciousness. The hunger of the tiny Astral-Being was immense, and it began absorbing massive quantities of Astral Energy with an unceasing appetite. Next to the tiny Astral-Being, there were two Astral Gates, and each gate contained an Astral Soul.

Finally, the tiny Astral-Being activated, allowing Qin Wentian's consciousness to enter it.

This time around, Qin Wentian did not gain any new memories. Instead, he saw a scene unfolding before him on a magnificent scale.

He saw an incomparably spectacular Ancestral Gate on the top of a holy mountain. The mountain was so tall that its peak seemed to reached the clouds, emitting a vigorous imposing sense of vitality, as if it intended to fight against the Heavens and Earth.

“Qin Heavenly Divine Sect”

Four words were carved on the stone columns of the grand Ancestral Gate, emanating an extremely domineering aura. Just from the aura of the words, one could see that the engraver was someone whose strength had already reached an unimaginable level.

In front of the grand Ancestral Gate, several strong cultivators

appeared, standing arrogantly on the air. Coronas of extreme radiance surrounded them as they released their Astral Souls. He had never seen these Astral Souls before; even the knowledge of their categories and types were beyond the sphere of Qin Wentian's comprehension. The Astral Souls they released actually transformed into a Celestial Phenomenon, materializing as a Heavenly Manifestation. Their whole world became filled with the actual manifestation of their Constellations. This scene was a direct blow towards Qin Wentian. Among this group of ultimate existences, how weak and tiny was he.

This group of ultimate existences were surrounding a middle-aged figure.

The middle-aged figure danced madly in the air, his eyes glowing with spirit. Facing off against these ultimate existences, he emanated an imposing and domineering aura as if he were a Monarch and they were his subjects. His whole body was shrouded by blinding light, akin to the God of this world.

All of a sudden, the whole world was transformed into a world of Manifested Constellations. The middle-aged man's body glowed with Divine Light as he was surrounded by the countless Constellations. Even his casual palm strikes could make the void tremble, making the world seem to split into pieces. As countless constellations became extinguished, the middle-aged warrior struck out again with a fist filled with supreme might. The expressions of those surrounding the middle-aged man turned into horror as their bodies disintegrated into dust.

How terrifying! That single strike was akin to Heaven's Wrath,

extinguishing the Heavenly Manifestations and annihilating all life. Qin Wentian wasn't able to feel the divine pressure; he could only bear witness while that chaotic and powerful current, annihilated everything.

But at this moment, a strong surge of thought current appeared, making the scene before his eyes flicker into non-existence. Qin Wentian could only feel that he was in the consciousness of the tiny Astral-Being as the fragments of memories ingrained themselves into his mind before he was forcibly ejected out.

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian steadied his breathing and opening his eyes, only to see Fatty's wretched face appear before him.

“What the f*ck are you doing?” Qin Wentian's body trembled involuntarily. Fatty grinned as he moved his head away from Qin Wentian. Only now did Qin Wentian realize that he was lying on the floor.

“Qin Wentian, you can really sleep. You've actually slept for three days.” Fatty exclaimed, slightly depressed.

What made him depressed was that during his sleep, the nine silvery needles had remained in Qin Wentian's head, causing the starlight from the constellations to unceasingly flowed into Qin Wentian.

Just staying beside Qin Wentian made him want to fall asleep as well..... Little Rascal, not giving Fatty any face, had fallen asleep long ago, lying beside Qin Wentian.

AGM 044 – Spirit Refinement Method

Qin Wentian stared blankly at Fan Le. His sleep lasted for three days?

“Astral Soul.” Qin Wentian closed his eyes. In his sea of consciousness, he had successfully opened up two Astral Gates. The Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul as well as the Great Dream Astral Soul resided inside them. Beside the Astral Gates, there was a dimmed figure of the tiny Astral-Being.

“Fragments of memory, there really were fragments of memories. My head feels as though it’s splitting apart right now.” Qin Wentian shook his head, trying to numb the pain as the new memories he gained slowly integrated themselves into his mind

“Dreamcast Art, a Cultivation Technique of the Heavenly Dipper Realm Level. This cultivation technique would be able to support my cultivation until I reach the Heavenly Dipper Realm.”

“Dreamcast Art consists of three levels: Shallow Dream State, Immersed Dream State, and Forgotten Dream State.

“The Shallow Dream State has the slowest speed when used for cultivation. Despite of this, it would still be several times faster compared to my normal rate of absorption. It would enable the user to enter light sleep and cultivate in that state.”

“Immersed Dream State enables the user to enter into a state of deep sleep that exponentially increased the speed of cultivation.

Not only that, the user would be able to create dreams, forcing others to enter into a dream-like state.

“Forgotten Dream State. The user would be able to form a dream-will, where his dreams are reality. He would even have the power to determine life and death in the dream state.”

Qin Wentian gradually immersed himself in the memories as his heart slightly trembled. During the time when he had condensed his first Astral Soul, the Tempered Thousand Hammers Refinement Technique was bestowed upon him via the tiny Astral-Being. It had been extremely suitable for cultivating at his Body Refinement Level. Now, after he condensed his 2nd Astral Soul, the Dreamcast Art appeared in his memories. It seemed that the tiny Astral-Being was intentionally passing onto him memories of secret arts and techniques based on the types of Astral Souls he condensed.

And this time round, not only was there the Dreamcast Art, an even more profound memory was unlocked: Spirit Refinement Method.

The Spirit Refinement Method was not a technique nor a Secret Art that could be used to increase one's cultivation level. Instead, it was an extremely terrifying, supreme method that would enable the user to condense and refine the Astral Energy within the body.

Based on his understanding of the memory, the 1st-level of the Spirit Refinement Method would require 1st-level Divine Imprints to condense and refine the Astral Energy he absorbed, transforming it into Divine Yuan Energy.

Using Divine Imprints to condense and refine Astral Energy, Qin Wentian had never imagined that such an earth-shattering method existed. Divine Imprints were capable of transforming ordinary weapons into Divine Weapons. For example, a flying-sword Divine Imprint, when inscribed onto a weapon, would bestow upon the weapon an aura of sharpness, as well as increasing weapon's might.

If, in the same context, the Astral Energy within a human body was refined and compacted by a 1st-level Divine Imprint, when the refined Astral Energy was released, boosted by the effects of the Divine Imprint, how terrifying would the unleashed might be?

And now, if the Astral Energy was replaced by Innate Strength, boosted by the effects of the Divine Imprint, how much more terrifying would the unleashed might be?

Just thinking of the possibilities would cause the blood of any cultivators to surged wildly.

However, the degree of difficulty in cultivating Spirit Refinement Method was even tougher than ascending the heavens. To fully convert the Astral Energy in the human body to Divine Energy, not only would one require a vast source of Astral Qi, one must also have great talent when it came to comprehending the insights of the Divine Imprint, not to mention that this type of cultivation method would take up an immense amount of time.

There was one more key aspect for Stellar Martial Cultivators: they would exhaust their True Yuan Energy during battles. This meant that the Divine Yuan that was so painstakingly gathered from the refinement of Astral Energy, would be completely depleted after a great battle and would require the cultivator to refine the energy once again. One could only imagine that, in order to practice the Spirit Refinement Method, one would need an incomparably vast amount of resources as well as invest all their time into cultivating the method.

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian slowly digested the memories, drawing in another huge breath.

Difficult! This Spirit Refinement Method was too difficult to practice. The Dreamcast Art would enable the user’s cultivation speed to increase, but wouldn’t this Spirit Refinement Method actually reduce one’s cultivation speed to the lowest possible level?

“The middle-aged man of the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect...the cultivation technique he practiced should have been this Spirit Refinement Method.” Qin Wentian recalled the scenario as his heart trembled with awe. But..... What was the truth of the relationship between Qin Wentian and the middle-aged man?

“Damn old fogey, what in the world did you leave behind for me?” Qin Wentian breathed. He thought back to Uncle Black, but sadly, after the incident at Qin Residence, Uncle Black had disappeared.

Fan Le waved his hands in front of Qin Wentian, causing Qin Wentian to stare at him.

“Are you sick?” Fatty asked with concern. Did this fellow sleep so much to the extent that he became idiotic?

Qin Wentian twitched his eyebrows as his face broke into a smile, causing Fatty to involuntarily shiver. Fatty hurriedly smiled, “Boss, I was just joking. I only meant to say that I was worried about you.”

Fatty winced. The beating he endured previously was still fresh in his mind.

“Shall we return to the Emperor Star Academy tomorrow?” Qin Wentian asked.

Fatty’s eyes shone, and a familiar wretched smile appeared on his face. They were finally about to return to the Emperor Star Academy. He had been badly anticipating this for quite a long time.

Qin Wentian was currently at the Arterial Circulation Realm. Based on his tyrannical Astral Souls, there shouldn’t be any problems dealing with Orfon.

As he thought of this, a cold glint appeared in Fatty’s eyes.

“Master.” At this moment, Francis approached with a face full of

smiles.

“What happen?” Qin Wentian asked, looking at Francis.

“Good news. Today, the Divine Weapon Pavilion auctioned a divine weapon that master forged. The news spread far and wide, attracting many people from the Royal Capital. Not only that, there were some bigshots present, and after they tested the divine weapon, they found that not only does it have the boosting effect, there’s an unexpected ability as well. The divine weapon has to ability to store Yuan Energy and is able to burst forth with it during unexpected moments in a fight, catching opponents unaware. Try guessing how much the 2nd-level low graded divine weapon sold for.”

Francis was extremely excited and happy that he did not follow the wrong man. If he chose to remain at the Star River Association, he would remained stagnant there unless he was willing to become Murin’s lapdog.

“How much was it?” Qin Wentian was extremely curious.

“Fifteen 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stone.” Francis exclaimed. He continued, “Normally, one Yuan Meteor Stone would be sufficient to purchase a 2nd-level low graded Divine Weapon. Not only that, this auction caused such a huge commotion that it attracted countless people. There were even some who were inspired to study Divine Imprints and become a weaponsmith.”

Qin Wentian smiled. If he had sold it normally instead of through

an auction, there wouldn't have been such an effect. Once his comprehension of the insights behind the Divine Imprints improved, he would be able to forge weapons of an even higher grade. By then, he would no longer need to worry about having sufficient Yuan Meteor Stones to cultivate the Spirit Refinement Method.

“Master, these are the Yuan Meteor Stones. After deducting their share, the Divine Weapon Pavilion gave us a total of eight pieces of Yuan Meteor Stones.” Francis smiled as he passed the Yuan Meteor Stones over to Qin Wentian.

“Right, hold on to these two. When I'm free in the future, I will be coming here to forge weapons. As for you, you should spend some time to comprehend the insights as well as ensure that your cultivation level does not stagnate.” Qin Wentian passed two Yuan Meteor Stones back to Francis.

“Thank you Master.”

“You can go.” Qin Wentian gave Francis permission to leave while he continued practicing the Dragon Subduing Fist, trying to comprehend the essence of the Spirit Refinement Technique as well as the Dreamcast Art.

There was no way he could master the Spirit Refinement Method without long term and consistent efforts. And as for the first level, the Shallow Dream State of the Dreamcast Art, Qin Wentian entered the dream state during night as he fell asleep. In the 5th Heavenly Layer, the Astral Energy from the two constellations cascaded down and fell on his body, allowing him to cultivate even

in his sleep. Fan Le could only stared blankly at Qin Wentian; he had been dumbstruck once he discovered what was happening.

Cultivating in his sleep? Was this even possible?

I'm so envious that I could die!

On the second morning, Qin Wentian and Fan Le bid goodbye to Francis. They rented two horses and began their journey to Emperor Star Academy.

Upon reaching Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian discovered that there were many others like him, all moving in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy's gate.

"Why is it so rowdy today?" Qin Wentian curiously asked.

"Could it be that they know I'm back?" Fan Le grinned.

Qin Wentian rolled his eyes. He was still thinking of how could he enter the academy and contact Senior Sister Luo Huan, as well as obtaining the Emperor Star Jade Medallion. To think that today, the Emperor Star Academy would open its gates, granting everyone free entry.

"Which academy are you guys from?" Beside them, there was a girl in braids who smiled at Qin Wentian while asking.

“Emperor Star Academy. How about you?” Qin Wentian replied.

“Wow, if you’re from Emperor Star Academy, then you must be extremely powerful. I’m currently cultivating at the Crimson Flame Academy. Today is the last day of the ranking competition, and since your academy has sent an invitation to all students from the other martial academies, I decided to come here myself and take a look at the strength of the Emperor Star Academy’s elites to motivate myself. There should still be time to join in the battle” The girl smiled, “It’s not every day that I’m here, so I shall get going first. See you later.”

After exchanging pleasantries, the girl departed, waving goodbye to both of them.

Qin Wentian locked gazes with Fan Le as both of them grinned. Very quickly, the two of them joined the flow of people and soon arrived at the training ground of the Emperor Star Academy. There were several people crowding together, gazing at the battle that was occurring on the arena.

“Murong Feng is, without a doubt, the strongest among the latest batch of students that joined the Emperor Star Academy. His talent is on par with the ten prodigies of the Royal Capital, condensing two Astral Souls and stepping into the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm when he was 16. His potential could only be described as monstrous.” On the Arena, a mature-looking youth easily defeated his opponent with a single strike, looking incomparably calm. To him, this was nothing but a procedure.

“This is the ultimate academy of Chu Country, where geniuses

are as common as cloud.” Every year, there would be people with monstrous potential like him. Other than Murong Feng, there was still Laxus and Du Hao, both of whom are at the 3rd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. In addition, there were still three cultivators at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. This current batch of students was much stronger than the previous one.

Discussions rang out amongst the crowd, reminding Qin Wentian that the Emperor Star Academy was a place filled with many hidden dragons and tigers.

“Tsk tsk, the number one genius, me, has yet to showcase my talent.” Fan Le laughed in a low tone. He cast a glance at Qin Wentian before continuing, “You don’t need to worry. Your first Astral Soul was from a layer even higher than the 3rd Heavenly Layer, similar to the genius me. I bet you didn’t absorb Heaven and Earth Yuan Qi until you condensed your first Astral Soul and embarking on the path of cultivation, am I right?”

“Orfon went up.” Qin Wentian’s eyes flashed with a cold light as he ignored Fan Le’s words, focusing on a figure standing on top of the Arena.

“He almost caused our deaths, right?” Fan Le smiled.

“Right.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Want to do something big?” Fan Le’s eyes narrowed to slits.

“How?” Qin Wentian asked.

“We play him to death.” Fan Le grinned.

“Fine, let’s do it.” Qin Wentian locked gazes with Fan Le as both of their faces broke into brilliant grins.

AGM 045 – On The Arena

Orfon's strength could be considered within the top 10 among this batch of new students. In this new batch, Murong Feng's cultivation was at the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, Laxus and Du Hao were at the 3rd level, and three others were at the 2nd level. One of them was none other than Orfon.

For this round, Orfon's opponent was at the first level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. There was an obvious disparity between their strength, and under the domineering stabs of his Frenzied Python Spear Arts, his opponent was swiftly defeated.

Upon witnessing this, Janus smiled indifferently as he stated, "Orfon's spear arts are as agile as a snake yet as domineering as a python. He has already comprehend the essence of this innate technique. After this battle, he's already ranked within the top ten."

"Good, Orfon didn't let me down." Orchon laughed while nodding his head; all was within his predictions.

On the other end, Mustang's countenance was unsightly. Because of their different perspectives, he and Janus belonged to two different factions within the Emperor Star Academy. This held true for their students as well. For every batch of new students, Mustang, Janus, and the other teachers would choose the students they wanted to teach, or more accurately, it was the students who chose which teachers they wanted to study under.

Orfon naturally belonged to Orchon's faction. As for Mustang, the student he had high expectations of, Qin Wentian, continued to be absent for the past ten days.

"This Orfon, no matter how I look at him, I still feel uncomfortable. Sigh, only Junior Brother Qin is honest and pleasing to the eye." Luo Huan's expression grew somewhat ugly as she witnessed the self-satisfied look on Orfon's face.

Orfon, who was on the arena, turned his body and prepared to depart. At this moment, however, a voice abruptly rang out.

"Amazing, truly amazing."

Within the sound of that voice, traces of provocation could be heard. The crowd saw the silhouette of a fatty approaching the arena. Seeing this fatty, the eyes of Orfon immediately narrowed, as a cold light flashed within them. How was this possible? He was still alive?

"How can you possibly appear here?" Orfon coldly asked in a low tone. How did Fan Le still manage to leave the Dark Forest alive after entering the Mirage City in the misty valley?

"Why can't I appear here?" Fan Le grinned as he looked at Orfon. Instantly, Orfon seemed to realise that he almost uttered information that could implicate him. He quickly shut his mouth, pretending as though he didn't know who Fan Le was.

“Long time no see.” Another voice drifted over. In front of Orfon, another familiar figure surfaced. This was none other than Qin Wentian.

“Junior Brother Qin.” Mountain and Luo Huan both excitedly stood up in the spectators’ stand. A radiant light flashed in Luo Huan’s eyes as she laughed, “I knew he wouldn’t die so easily.”

A white blur flickered, suddenly leaping up into Luo Huan’s embrace. Under countless envious gazes, Little Rascal chose the softest spot, causing many in the crowd to salivate.

As Mustang spotted Qin Wentian, his heart felt as though a knot had been loosened. To think that this little fellow would walk directly up the arena.

The spectators had looks of bewilderment on their faces. Why were two more people suddenly going up onto the arena?

Qin Wentian and Fan Le slowly strode forward in Orfon’s direction while Orfon retreated continuously, as if he were afraid of them. After all, in the Dark Forest, Orfon had personally witnessed what Fan Le and Qin Wentian were capable of. Makino, a fellow cultivator at the same cultivation level as him, was even killed in mid air by Fan Le’s arrows.

“Impudent! Who are you two? How dare you make trouble?!” Janus hollered. He swept his gaze towards Qin Wentian and Fan Le as though he had no idea who they were.

“Qin Wentian, student of Emperor Star Academy.”

“Fan Le, student of Emperor Star Academy.”

“Oh, is that so? Then why did you only appear today?” Janus coldly laughed.

“We were slightly late because of someone delayed us.” Fan Le continued, grinning foolishly.

“Delay? You say that you were delayed and expect me to believe that? This is the Emperor Star Academy, not some place where you can do as you like. Scram!” Janus stated with a chilly glint in his eyes.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le both looked at Janus who was in the spectator’s stand, while laughing coldly in their hearts.

“Could I ask Elder Janus one thing? Since we passed the initial examination and survived the training expedition to the Dark Forest, we can be considered legitimate students of the academy, right?” Fan Le smiled while looking at Janus.

“Right.” Janus had no way to refute Fan Le’s claims. This matter was known to all.

“Elder Janus personally witnessed me passing the initial examination. Countless others also saw me entering the Dark Forest. Now that I’m alive and well, don’t tell me that Elder Janus

is going to question the validity of my status as a student of the Emperor Star Academy?” Fan Le continued smiling foolishly.

“Even if that’s so, what of it?” Janus coldly snorted, “Today, my Emperor Star Academy.....”

“Stop!” Fan Le interjected before Janus could even complete his sentence. Fatty slowly raised his head and shouted, “Since that’s the case, why are you still farting around here?”

As the sound of Fan Le’s voice faded, silence abounded. Everyone’s gaze was on Fan Le, who proudly inclined his head with a radiant smile on his face. Although Fatty was currently smiling, his temper had been truly incensed back in the Dark Forest.

And what was even more deplorable was that Orchon, in front of so many others, had actually pointed his spear at him, causing Fatty to be extremely humiliated.

Astral Light glowed and coalesced into the form of an Astral Bow that appeared in Fatty’s hand. In the space of a breath, an arrow shot out with dazzling speed. The heads of the crowd followed the trajectory of the arrow with faces full of puzzlement. Very quickly, the arrow descended behind Orfon, sealing his path of escape.

In the instant that Fatty shot the arrow, Qin Wentian also started to move.

“Boom!” The ground of the arena shook as Qin Wentian explode

forth with the force of a hurricane, dashing towards Orfon. The ground trembled violently, resonating with Qin Wentian's every step.

The suddenness of the situation was so quick that it gave the spectators no time to react. Fan Le had just finished scolding Orfon when Qin Wentian and Fan Le, in front of everyone, decided to make their moves against Orfon during the Emperor Star Academy's ranking competition.

Orfon's expression was extremely unsightly; although he wanted to retreat, his path of retreat had already been sealed, so he fully understood how perverse Fan Le's skills in archery were. Since Fan Le had sealed the path of his retreat, there was no need for him to even consider doing so. Thus, he could only proceed forwards. Only by smashing down Qin Wentian would he be able to successfully retreat.

As he thought of this, Orfon sprinted madly in Qin Wentian's direction. Not retreating but instead choosing to advance, his Frenzied Python Spear abruptly unleashed a torrent of stabs that were like an agile, dancing snake capable of extinguishing everything. He wanted to pierce Qin Wentian's body until it was full of holes.

Borrowing the aid of the momentum from his explosive speed, Qin Wentian struck out with his fist, displaying the tyrannical might of the Dragon Subduing Fist. The savage roar of a raging azure dragon roared out, directly clashing against Orfon's Frenzied Python Spear Arts.

“Bang, bang.....” The Astral long spear in Orfon’s hand was destroyed inch by inch. Facing the terrifying Qi that was emanated from the Draconic Roar of the Nine Heavens, Orfon’s face instantly paled, his facial features feeling as though they were about to get lacerated by the force of the roar.

“Arterial Circulation Realm.” Orfon’s heart trembled. Qin Wentian’s aura indicated that he was at the Arterial Circulation Realm! But despite of this, why were his attacks so tyrannical?

His body retreated, and Astral Light condensed into an Astral Shield that hovered in front of him.

“Howl!”

The sound of the roar trembled the void, as the spectators’ gazes were fixated on the arena. They only saw the sharp claws of an Azure Dragon flashing past and shredding the Astral Shield into nothingness. As it flexed, the claw of the Azure Dragon grabbed Orfon’s throat.

The next moment, Qin Wentian was choking Orfon, lifting him up in the air with a single hand.

“Impudent!”

“Release him!”

Sounds of anger and rage rang out as Orchon and two other youths instantly rushed forth, releasing their auras. Especially

Orchon, whose long spear was pointed towards Qin Wentian, filled with killing intent.

“You are courting death.” Orchon coldly uttered as he glared at Qin Wentian like he were glaring at a dead animal.

Qin Wentian tremendously hated this look of his. Just like back in the Dark Forest, Orchon’s look caused him to feel extremely uncomfortable.

Hence, with a violent shift of his hands, Qin Wentian slammed Orfon down onto the ground, causing the sound of bones shattering to echo out along with that of a pitiful cry. Orfon’s face immediately turned green from the impact.

Qin Wentian actually dared to abuse Orfon in front Orchon. This action could no longer be described as merely a slap on his face.

Orchon had never experienced such intense rage and humiliation before. His face was burning red, his killing intent surging unbridled. He wanted to dismember Qin Wentian’s body into ten thousand pieces.

Even Mustang and the rest of his students were stunned by the sudden change of the situation. By the time they recovered, many thoughts flashed in Mustang’s head as his eyes glimmered with excitement.

“This fellow is truly an honest person.” Laughter sparkled in Luo

Huan's beautiful eyes. Normally, Qin Wentian looked like an innocent and harmless fellow, but once he was enraged, he was thoroughly brutal, just like what was happening right now.

But oh, how she loved it!

AGM 046 – A Simple Answer

All the teachers from the Emperor Star Academy were shocked. As they stood up and looked at what had just occurred on the arena, their expressions became unsightly.

Today was the last day of the ranking competition organized by the Emperor Star Academy, which invited students from the other academies to gain experience through observation. But today, in the arena, there were actually two students who wanted to kill Orfon.

How audacious! In the entirety of the Emperor Star Academy, such a thing had never happened before.

“Indeed, they are students of Emperor Star Academy. How unbridled.” The teachers from the other academies smiled as they observed the events. There were many geniuses who were proud and arrogant, so it was inevitable that there would be clashes in a place where such geniuses were gathered together.

The Emperor Star Academy was proclaimed as the largest basket that contained the most geniuses in the entire Chu Country. In it, there were many genius students who were obstinate and arrogant, making them the hardest to control. Hence, the teachers of the Emperor Star Academy were all extremely formidable and powerful.

In the spectators’ stand, there were many older students — Luo Huan and Orchon’s peers — whose faces all lit up with smiles.

“Interesting, but I wonder if their strength matches the size of their arrogance.”

Janus walked down the spectators’ stand step by step, looking over at Qin Wentian. He coldly stated, “Never has such an impudent student appeared before in the history of the Emperor Star Academy.”

“Well, there has now.” Qin Wentian stared back at Janus, and retorted with a reply that was just as cold.

“It’s always better to follow someone else’s lead.” Fan Le grinned. At this moment, he appeared at Qin Wentian’s side and looked at Orfon on the ground with a fierce glare in his eyes. “Accidentally” treading on Orfon’s hands, Fatty twisted his feet, causing Orfon to shriek pitifully.

Fatty looked down and apologetically exclaimed, “Oh, sorry, I didn’t see you there.”

Although this was what he said, Fatty had made sure to use his full strength when he trod on Orfon’s hands — which lead to Orfon’s shriek. The spectators all rolled their eyes. This fellow was shameless!

“Well, do you see him now?” The killing intent rolled off Orchon’s body in waves as he stalked forward in anger.

Fatty glanced at Orchon. He continued trodding on Orfon’s

hands, taking care to use his full strength. The trodding was so painful that it almost forced tears out of Orfon's eyes.

"I see him, but I'm not moving away from him." Fatty grinned at Orchon, knowing that the look Orchon gave him that day was a sight that he would never forget.

Apparently, this fatty loved to harbor grudges.

"Stop." Qin Wentian commanded in a cold voice, and soon after, a Heavenly Hammer materialized in his hands, and rested on top of Orfon's head. As long as he wished it, Orfon's life could be extinguished immediately.

Janus, Orchon, and the rest, halted their steps. It was just their luck to run into these two madmen. Despite their hatred and anger, they had no choice but to tolerate it.

"What do you want?" Janus directed the question at the two of them. This was the first time that he'd been humiliated to such an extent by two students. As long as Orfon was rescued, he'd certainly make sure that both Qin Wentian and Fan Le would die a horrible death.

"You have to ask my boss, I'm just a low-profile individual." Fatty smiled, tossing the ball to Qin Wentian. Once the spectators heard Fatty's words, they rolled their eyes extensively.

This fatty was really low-profile.....

Fan Le grew extremely angry whenever he thought of what had happened back in the Dark Forest, and thus, he held nothing back in his choice to seek revenge. But naturally, Fan Le was clear that the source of all of this was Qin Wentian.

He and Qin Wentian both stood shoulder-to-shoulder on the arena, facing the upcoming storm in unison, but still, he ultimately decided to give Qin Wentian the right to make the final decision.

Fatty was “low-profile”, but he was certainly not a coward. For him to be standing in his current spot was enough to indicate that no matter what decision Qin Wentian made, he was prepared to endure any consequential backlash.

“This Fatty is shameless, but he’s really loyal.” Luo Huan was an intelligent woman, and upon seeing the scenario unfold, she discovered that, similar to her liking of Qin Wentian, she also liked the “low-profile”, shameless Fatty.

“Fatty, do you think that if we release Orfon, Orchon will apologize to us and let us go?” Qin Wentian laughed as he cast a glance at Fan Le.

“No.” Fan Le shook his head. “Previously in the Dark Forest, he had already wanted our lives. Now, I think that he wants to kill us even more; even if we fall to our knees and beg for mercy, nothing will change.”

“I think you’re right.” Qin Wentian mumbled softly, causing the expressions of both Orchon and Janus to turn even more unsightly. The conversation between Qin Wentian and Fan Le had completely disregarded their presences, showing that they had no intentions of sparing Orfon.

His gaze swept over the crowd, before landing on Mustang, as he asked with a smile, “Teacher Mustang, I have a few questions to ask.”

“Go ahead.” Mustang replied.

“If you have no grudges with a particular person, and yet that particular person still wants to kill you, and not only that, that person has almost succeeded... If that person landed in your hands, what would you do?” Qin Wentian asked.

“I would kill him.” Mustang replied.

“But his clan wields great power.” Qin Wentian added.

“Even if I don’t kill him, the power his clan wields would still be just as great.” Mustang replied.

“Mustang.” Janus roared in anger. How could he not understand the intent hidden in their conversation. Mustang was obviously instigating Qin Wentian — allowing Qin Wentian to do as he pleased.

This, everyone understood. It must've been Orfon who had wanted to kill Qin Wentian and Fan Le, and thus today, regardless of the cost, they had to appear on stage and trod on Orfon — even if they had to challenge the authority of the Emperor Star Academy.

The previous conversation that had occurred earlier between Fatty and Qin Wentian had been staged long ago.

Kill or don't kill; the result was still the same! So why hesitate, just kill him!

Now the intent behind the conversation between Mustang and Qin Wentian was clear. He was asking the opinion of Mustang, hiding his intent behind words, but naturally, the words exchanged were fully understood by the spectators.

Regardless of whether or not he killed Orfon, the power their clan had wouldn't change, and they would definitely deal with Qin Wentian. This point was doubtless, and thus, to Qin Wentian, there was no difference whether he killed Orfon or not.

“Mustang, the iron rule of Emperor Star Academy states that students are forbidden to kill others within the grounds of the Academy. You should also know this rule. If this rule is broken, the Disciplinary Committee will certainly be roused.” The tone of Janus was filled with a strong, chilly intent. Mustang, he actually dared to instigate Qin Wentian.

“Qin Wentian.” Mustang cast a look at Qin Wentian, as he

continued. “In the history of the Emperor Star Academy, there were three cases before where students killed others within the grounds of the Academy.”

“In one of the cases, that student was put to death.”

“As for the second case, the student that broke the rule was imprisoned for a total of 50 years. After that, he swore not to step out of the Emperor Star Academy, and was willing to become a staff of the school.

The voice of Mustang caused the expressions of those around him to turn solemn. The iron rule of the Emperor Star Academy was too strict. Within the academy grounds, no deaths were allowed. Otherwise, the consequences would be too severe. And precisely because of this iron rule, no one had dared to misbehave within the Emperor Star Academy.

“What about the 3rd case?” Qin Wentian asked. If it really was a path to death, why would Mustang still have said those things to him during their conversation earlier.

“As for the last case of a student who killed others, he eventually became the current principal of the Emperor Star Academy.”

The calm voice of Mustang caused the spectators to quieten down. They knew how strict the iron rule of the Emperor Star Academy was, especially for the crime of killing a student from the same school within the academy grounds.

However, not many knew that the current principal of the Emperor Star Academy, had once broken this iron rule.

Qin Wentian locked gazes with Mustang, but he didn't continue asking; because he had already understood.

Three students, with three different fates. One died, another became a staff member of the Academy, and the last became the principal.

Three different fates because out of the three of them, their worth to the academy was all different.

Out of the students of Emperor Star Academy, many were arrogant. They came from all places — all with outstanding talents, and full of themselves. However in the school, it didn't matter how arrogant or how proud you were. The only thing that mattered was if you had the capacity to be proud — if you had the capacity to be arrogant — in the first place.

For geniuses, pride was their confidence. For useless second-rate talents, pride was their burial ground.

In this world, other than kinship, no one owed anyone else for a living. If you want others to help you, you first have to prove what you can give in return. Qin Wentian already had understood this logic back when he was in the Star River Association. Because Qin Wentian hadn't agreed to his proposal, Murin chose to betray him, accepting the benefits brought to him by the Ye Clan.

This, is reality; this, is the naked truth.

And now, Qin Wentian was faced with a choice yet again. Regardless of him killing or not killing Orfon, the Ou Clan, and Orchon, would certainly want his death — so there was no need to take them into consideration.

The only thing that gave Qin Wentian pause, was the attitude of the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Wentian inclined his head, and stared at Orchon as a brilliant smile was displayed on his face. An answer could already be seen in his clear eyes.

In the Sky Harmony City, he was driven to desperate straits by the Ye Clan. After he had arrived at the Royal Capital, Janus had made things difficult for him, and Orfon had even wanted to kill him. Obviously, his enemies were the Ye Clan, the Ou Clan, and maybe even the clan in the Chu Country that wielded absolute authority — The Royal Clan.

This time around, if he chose to tolerate this and spare Orfon, the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan would treat this as a sign of weakness, and would continue making life difficult for him.

Hence, needless to say, to him, the answer was extremely simple!

TL Note: The clan of Orfon and Orchon is known as the Ou Clan.

AGM 047 – Kill

Countless gazes were fixated onto Qin Wentian, what decision would he make?

“Buzz!” Orchon didn’t attempt to mask the killing intent he had towards Qin Wentian as the long spear in his hands began to emit a terrifying light. Staring at the grin on Qin Wentian’s face, a disquieting feeling filled his heart; could it be that this Qin Wentian would actually dare to kill Orfon?

“Release him.” The tone of Orchon’s voice was filled with a immensely chilly air.

Looking at the cold-looking face of Orchon, Qin Wentian felt exceedingly calm as he continued, “Even when things have reached such a stage, you still refuse to put aside your so-called ‘pride’. That stare you used to look at me, it’s still the same as previously. It seems that Orfon’s death doesn’t bother you in the slightest.

As he finished speaking, the fist of Qin Wentian began to glow with a brilliant light. At this moment, the hearts of all the spectators tensed.

“If you dare to kill him, I guarantee that your fate won’t be like the third person. You’ll definitely have the same ending as the first.” Janus glared at Qin Wentian. The third person had gone on to become the Principal of the Emperor Star Academy, while the first person was executed by the Emperor Star Academy.

“That might be so, but even if I don’t kill him, in the Royal Capital, I’d still have nowhere to go too.” Qin Wentian’s smile remained the same. The first person suffered that fate because he was not worth much to the Emperor Star Academy. Since that was the case, how could he have a firm footing in the Royal Capital?

Lowering his head, Qin Wentian glanced at Orfon.

Orfon was looking at him as well. This time around, as he saw the gaze of Qin Wentian, Orfon felt true terror.

“Your life and death is in my hands, but there’s no one willing to lower their heads for you. The one you should hate, shouldn’t be me.” Qin Wentian calmly stated, causing the body of Orfon to shiver violently. The words of Qin Wentian were akin to an announcement of his death.

This was correct considering the few times he wanted Qin Wentian’s life — it was only expected that Qin Wentian wanted to kill him. However, between his brother and Janus, there was no one who was willing to lower their heads and beg for mercy. This caused him to feel a tragic wave of sorrow. The brother he had always respected, had threatened Qin Wentian with his ‘pride’, even when Orfon’s life was on the line.

Qin Wentian raised his Heavenly Hammer, integrated the essence of the Dragon Subduing Fist within it, and slammed the head of the hammer down violently as the draconic roar of an azure dragon rang out.

“I regret this!” Orfon howled with rage and depression, an instant before his body exploded. The only sound remaining after that, was the echo of his unwillingness, reverberating in the air, unwilling to be dissipated.

It was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

Qin Wentian, as of that moment, became the fourth person in the history of the Emperor Star Academy that had broken the iron rule.

The heartbeats of Mustang, Luo Huan, and the rest, palpitated wildly. Qin Wentian had actually chosen to kill Orfon in front of so many people.

The spectators all drew in a huge breath. The Emperor Star Academy had just produced two madmen.

The eyes of Orchon radiated an extreme chill as he approached Qin Wentian. Roiling waves of anger and killing intent could be felt emanating from his body.

“Orchon.” Janus shouted, causing Orchon to halt his steps. He wanted nothing more than to pierce Qin Wentian’s brains with his long spear. Qin Wentian had already committed the huge taboo of the Emperor Star Academy, becoming the fourth person to break the iron rule; Orchon couldn’t be the fifth. If he did become the fifth, even if he avenged Orfon’s death, he could still land himself into hot soup. The Emperor Star Academy was famed for ignoring social status and authority when it came to meting out discipline.

“Killing your own colleague during the ranking competition of the Emperor Star Academy; you’re the first that’s so audacious in challenging the authority of the academy.” Janus’s stare bore into the eyes of Qin Wentian, as if he was looking at a dead animal.

“I, Janus, with the status of an Elder of the Academy, humbly make a request of the Disciplinary Committee. Please allow Orchon to kill Qin Wentian, in order to avenge the death of his brother.” Janus beseeched, and shortly after, several silhouettes jumped up on top of the arena. These people were none other than the students belonging to the Disciplinary Committee. They all appeared up upon the stage, using their presence to pressure Qin Wentian.

Behind these silhouettes, a middle-aged figure slowly made his way up.

Thousand-Hands, the Elder in charge of the Disciplinary Committee, had appeared.

His gaze was expressionless, as he cast a glance at Qin Wentian.

“Within the Dark Forest, during the training exercise, Orfon attempted to kill Qin Wentian countless times. If this wasn’t the case, both of them wouldn’t have attempted to seek their revenge on Orfon. I, Mustang, beseech the Disciplinary Elder to have mercy. I’m willing to accept Qin Wentian as my personal disciple.” Mustang stepped forth, as he walked towards the Arena.

Janus wanted Qin Wentian to die, while Mustang wanted to protect Qin Wentian.

“Elder Thousand-Hands, Mustang instigated Qin Wentian to kill his own colleagues. If we allow this beast to roam free today... I strongly urge the Disciplinary Committee to punish Mustang in his place instead.” Janus stepped forwards as well, his eyes staring daggers at Mustang.

All the older students of the Emperor Star Academy knew that Janus and Mustang belonged to two different factions, akin to water and fire. The scenario that was happening wasn't out of their expectations. What remained now, was how the Disciplinary Committee would chose to handle this situation.

“Qin Wentian, do you plead guilty to killing Orfon during the ranking competition?” Thousand Hands ignored the words of both Janus and Mustang as he asked this question, staring at Qin Wentian with a cold glint in his eyes.

The members of the Disciplinary Committee had surrounded Qin Wentian.

Looking at this situation, the hearts of the spectators all trembled. It seemed that the Disciplinary Committee had no intention of sparing Qin Wentian.

“The matter of Orfon attempting to kill me within the Dark Forest, would the Disciplinary Committee investigate this and seek justice for me?” Qin Wentian asked as he looked at Thousand-

Hands.

“Nope.” Thousand-Hands replied bluntly.

“Since the Disciplinary Committee can’t be bothered, is there anything wrong with me seeking revenge for myself?” Qin Wentian asked, not backing down in the slightest.

“This fellow.” Mountain, who was in the spectator stands, was dumbstruck. Why was Qin Wentian still not budging an inch, clashing directly with the Disciplinary Committee.

“I humbly beseech the Disciplinary Committee again, to let Orchon kill this fellow, allowing him the right to seek revenge for his brother.”

Thousand-Hands remained silent for a moment, before waving his hands, signaling the students of the Disciplinary Committee to withdraw, leaving Orchon alone against Qin Wentian.

“Elder Thousand-Hands, if the Disciplinary Committee agrees to Janus’s request, then I’m afraid that I’ll have to interfere.” Mustang stepped forward strongly, without backing away.

“Mustang, you dare to interfere with the Disciplinary Committee?” Janus coldly sneered, as he moved to block Mustang. While Orchon, emitting killing intent, slowly stalked towards Qin Wentian. The students of Janus and Mustang, with Qin Wentian as the centre point, all appeared on the Arena, standing opposite of

each other.

The wind of this commotion was blowing stronger and stronger.

At this moment, in the center of the raging typhoon, Astral Light glimmered atop the forehead of Qin Wentian, as he released his Astral Soul. The incomparably resplendent glow of the golden halo signified that his Astral Soul was condensed from at least the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

This scenario caused the eyes of Thousand-Hands to narrow. He wasn't acquainted with Qin Wentian, and thus, he had no idea of knowing that Qin Wentian's first Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

TL Note: Due to the effects of the needle technique, they still think that his first Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

"The 3rd Heavenly Layer, what's this guys background? No wonder Mustang wants to protect him." Seeing Qin Wentian releasing his Astral Soul, many people felt that things had just gotten more interesting. Was the Emperor Star Academy going to execute a talent whose first Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer?

Traces of contemplation could be seen in the eyes of Thousand Hands. This fellow, Qin Wentian, was extremely prideful, but despite being so, did indeed have the ability to be proud. Thousand-Hands was considering how best he should deal with

him.

“Orchon, make your move.” Janus shouted. Almost immediately, Orchon dashed towards Qin Wentian, while Janus moved to block Mustang.

Mountain stepped forth, releasing his Astral Soul. His whole person seemed to become a huge solid wall in front of Qin Wentian, as he punched out with his fist, as a projection of a heavy rock containing boundless might smashed towards Orchon.

“Scram.” Orchon hollered in rage, as the long spear of his glowed with Astral Light, as the shadows of several frenzied python struck forth, shattering the projection of the heavy rock.

The countenance of Mountain, sank. The pressure that was emitted by Orchon forced him to retreat. Although Orchon was arrogant, within the Emperor Star Academy, he could indeed be considered a strong cultivator.

As for Thousand-Hands, he was still in the midst of spectating and pondering.

At this moment, Qin Wentian was still incomparably calm. Since he didn't want to be persecuted by the Ou Clan and the Ye Clan, there was only one method remaining to him. He would have to showcase his true worth in front of this Arena!

An even brighter radiance shone when the second Astral Soul of

Qin Wentian was released. Besides the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, the Dreamcast Astral Soul appeared.

Thousand-Hands inclined his head as he gazed at the second Astral Soul of Qin Wentian. The next moment, his gaze stiffened as his countenance froze.

The color of the halo of this Astral Soul, was actually pure gold. The Dreamcast Astral Soul was revolving within the pure-golden colored halo.

Thousand-Hands was an extremely strong cultivator of the Yuanfu Realm, and was the Elder in charge of the Disciplinary Committee. But in his entire life, he never would've imagined that he would witness a pure-golden corona of an Astral Soul being released by a 16-year old youth.

But today, he witnessed it.

Not only him alone, so did everyone else.

And when the Dreamcast Astral Soul, which possessed a pure-golden corona, was released, in that instant, the matter of Qin Wentian killing Orfon lost all its meaning. Everyone's gaze landed upon the 2nd Astral Soul that Qin Wentian had released.

The expression of Qin Wentian was still exceedingly calm. But now, his place in the hearts of the spectators was no longer the same as before.

That pure-golden color of the Astral Soul that he released, should've been condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer right?

His first Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer; his second Astral Soul, was condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer.

This was unprecedented throughout the entire history of the Emperor Star Academy. Qin Wentian was the only one who'd managed to achieve this.

“Ceasefire.” A voice, akin to the rumbling of thunder, drifted from a figure in the sky, causing both those in combat, and the spectators, to be awakened from their shock.

The pupils of Thousand-Hands narrowed, as hints of reverence flickered in his eyes, and he commanded. “Everyone, halt. Those who disobey will be dealt with according to the disciplinary rules.”

Everyone's gaze, during that short instant of ceasefire, rested upon Qin Wentian, as traces of awe were reflected in their eyes. While Janus and Orchon's expressions were extremely fascinating to behold.

Silence, like the quietness of the dead, descended. The focus of the spectators was on the youth who'd killed Orfon; he had become one of the lead actors of today.

AGM 048 – Punishment Result

After Qin Wentian condensed his 2nd Astral Soul, the Dreamcast Astral Soul, he had once again used his acupuncture needle techniques to camouflage the radiance of his Astral Soul. However, this time around, he didn't suppress the radiance too much, only lessening the intensity of the gold corona's radiance.

Qin Wentian had thought of this beforehand. Based on the authority Ye Clan wielded in the Royal Capital, if he don't display sufficient talent to attract the attention of the Emperor Star Academy's elders, it would be extremely difficult for him to stand alone against the entire Royal Capital. He didn't dare to release the intense pure-golden radiance of an Astral Soul condensed from the 5th Heavenly Layer, because if his talent were shown to be too monstrous, his opponents would try to kill him regardless of any cost.

Hence, his concern led to the current situation.

“I had already passed Teacher Mustang's examination back in Sky Harmony City, and because of the Emperor Star Academy's promise, I travelled a few tens of thousand Li, rushing to the Emperor Star Academy in the Royal Capital to register myself. Who would have thought that Janus would not only withhold my right to obtain my Emperor Star Jade Medallion, but also want me to participate in the training expedition organised by the Coalition of the Nine Martial Academies. I had no choice but to agree.”

In the dead silence, Qin Wentian spoke without interruptions. There was only his voice, echoing through the air.

“In the training expedition, Orfon gathered others, pursuing us and trying countless ways to kill me and Fan. They almost succeeded, but luckily for us, Fan Le ignited his Bloodline Limit, which enabled us to defeat Orfon, swapping the roles of the hunter and the hunted with us doing the pursuing instead.

However, Orchon appeared at this moment and inverted black and white, saying that Fan Le and I wanted to kill our own colleagues. That Orchon wanted to kill us instead! So now, I put this question forth to you: Who in the Emperor Star Academy would have helped us administer justice in that moment?”

“After that, Orfon once again roped in experts at the Arterial Circulation Realm, forcing us to move into the forbidden grounds within the Dark Forest. Luckily, Lady Luck smiled on us, and we return alive after several days. The first thing we wanted to do after surviving was to return to Emperor Star Academy, and completing our registration. Who would have thought Orfon would appear and fill our hearts with rage and hatred? Seeking justice, I struck out and killed Orfon. I will ask you this: why was there anything wrong with my actions?”

In addition to his display of talent, Qin Wentian gave a thorough breakdown of what had happened inside the Dark Forest. The public perception began to shift, and some of the spectators started to think that Qin Wentian’s actions were justified. There was nothing wrong with what he did.

And according to Qin Wentian’s words, not only was his talent extraordinary, that Fatty, Fan Le, actually possessed a Bloodline Limit, making him another monstrous genius. If that was the case,

the Emperor Star Academy had no choice but to carefully consider what steps they wanted to take.

“If the Emperor Star Academy still finds me guilty, I will revoke my status as a student of the Emperor Star Academy. After all, I have yet to receive the Jade Medallion, so I can’t be fully considered as one of your students. As for the matter of killing Orfon, just treat it as an ordinary bystander coming here to seek revenge.” Qin Wentian continued saying, “Now, what do you want to do?”

As the sound of his voice faded, the radiant Astral Soul was retracted. However, the hearts of the spectators were still in turmoil, unable to calm down.

“I, Mustang, finally obtained such an outstanding student. If the Emperor Star Academy wants to expel him or deem him guilty, I no longer see any meaning in remaining here as a teacher.” Mustang gazed at Thousand-Hand, as he indifferently exclaimed. This caused all the pressure to instantly land on Thousand-Hands’ shoulders, putting him in a difficult position.

At this moment, he no longer had the heart to discipline Qin Wentian. If he did, he feared that the Emperor Star Academy’s higher management would place all the blame on him. There may even be a few of them watching the events unfolding right now.

Thinking of this, Thousand-Hands felt extremely depressed. If he didn’t handle the matter well, there would be many opinions of disapproval.

But of course, the person who was the most depressed was none other than Janus. The moment Qin Wentian displayed both his Astral Souls, he already knew that there was no way that Qin Wentian would die today. Not only that, those in the upper management would certainly have their eyes on Qin Wentian.

Janus, had just foolishly offended someone with such a monstrous potential.

And there was Orchon, who immensely hated Qin Wentian and couldn't wait to rend him into pieces. His problem originated from him wanting to get into Ye WuQue's good graces by helping Ye WuQue eradicate a small thorn. To him, this wasn't something difficult to accomplish at all, but never would Orchon have thought that even his brother would die instead of Qin Wentian. However, there was no one that would say that Qin Wentian and Fan Le's actions were unjustified, and thus, he hated Qin Wentian. Orchon was immensely angered; how would he ever explain this to his clan?

“NONSENSE!” At this moment, Thousand-Hands finally spoke. To everyone's astonishment, his speech was directed at Qin Wentian.

“What a load of nonsense! Since you have decided to undertake the examination by my Emperor Star Academy and have survived the training expedition to the Dark Forest, how could you not be a student of my Emperor Star Academy?” Thousand-Hands berated Qin Wentian, as he continued, “The Jade Medallion is only a small procedure, nothing to make a fuss about. Since you have already chosen my Emperor Star Academy, this means that you are already

a student.”

“And so, as the Elder in charge of the Disciplinary Committee, it is within my rights to punish you. Although you said that it was for the sake of revenge, you still created such a large commotion that dragged Orchon and Orfon’s reputations to the ground. I’ve decided to imprison you for a month, and at the same time, I will launch a full-scale investigation about the matters in the Dark Forest. If it is as you have said, I will treat this as a personal match between you and Orfon, meaning that you would not have broken the rules of the academy.”

“Naturally, if what you said is false, then I, I will, I wil.....” Thousand-Hands stuttered; evidently he had not thought of what punishment to give. He paused for a moment before hurriedly adding, “We will determine your punishment in the future. As for you, come with me first.”

“Mfff.” Luo Huan clasped her hands to cover her mouth, preventing her laughter from echoing out. Traces of delight could be seen in her eyes; this was the first time she witnessed the impartial Elder Thousand-Hands in such an awkward situation.

Although Thousand-Hands appeared to be berating Qin Wentian, in actuality, the intent behind his words was known to all. It didn’t matter whether Qin Wentian had lied about the matter in the Dark Forest because there would be no repercussions for killing Orfon. Orfon died for nothing.

In addition, since Thousand-Hands had strongly emphasized the fact that Qin Wentian was a student of the Emperor Star Academy,

his intentions were obvious to discern.

Both Qin Wentian and Fan Le locked gaze as traces of a smile could be seen in their eyes. Today, they had finally spat out that mouthful of humiliating air.

However, Orchon's gaze was just as irritating as before.

Fatty was silently thinking that if they dealt with Orchon too, it would have been perfect.

But naturally, Fatty only fantasized about it. After all, he did not yet have sufficient strength. Fatty's philosophy for those enemies that were stronger than him was that even ten years was not too late for a gentleman that wanted to take his revenge.

Against those he had sufficient strength to deal with, his philosophy was that a hero does not delay himself in seeking revenge.

So, regarding Orfon, Fatty chose to be a hero, but regarding Orchon, Fatty decided to be a gentleman.

“And as for you, you will be imprisoned along with Qin Wentian so that the both of you can reflect upon your actions.” Now, just as Fatty was fantasizing about being a gentleman, Thousand-Hands turned to him and announced that Fatty would be imprisoned as well. Fan Le shrugged and patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders, “Brothers should share fortune and survive crises together. This is

my brother Qin Wentian, so I, Fan Le, will naturally accompany him.”

Fan Le proudly raised his head as he replied in a loud tone, as if he were afraid that no one knew he was Qin Wentian’s brother.

“How shameless.”

“This fatty is just too shameless.” The spectators silently scolded in their hearts; this fatty was doing this so that some of the awe inspired by Qin Wentian would splash upon his face.

Naturally, only Qin Wentian knew that when the two of them had fought for their lives in the Dark Forest, had not been aware of his talent. He could have chosen to walk his own path without incurring the wrath of Qin Wentian’s enemies, but instead he chose to stick with Qin Wentian. Although Fatty was shameless, he was someone who truly valued brotherhood.

The students from the Disciplinary Committee took Fan Le and Qin Wentian away, but Mustang was not worried. The moment when Qin Wentian released his Astral Souls, he already predicted that this would happen.

Mustang cast a glance at Janus before leading his students away. There was no longer any meaning in having their students clash. Despite this, the recent scene was freshly imprinted in the minds of the spectators.

On the same day, the affair at Emperor Star Academy was swiftly disseminated around the Royal Capital.

“His name is Qin Wentian? He’s so dashing.” A youthful female revealed a lovelorn expression as she thought of that imposing youth killing Orfon while disregarding the consequences.

Orchon took with him Orfon’s corpse as he left. He had to return to his clan swiftly, since the elders of his clan would soon catch wind of this news.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le’s punishment was imprisonment, but the place in which they were being imprisoned was an extremely elegant courtyard with the fragrance of flowers permeating the air. There was even a little bridge over running water in the middle of the courtyard.

This caused Fatty to sigh loudly. It would have been perfect if there were a few other pretty babes imprisoned together with them.

Although Fatty was extremely at ease, Thousand-Hands’ emotions were currently the opposite of Fatty’s. At this moment, several figures appeared in front of him, all of whom were at the Elder Rank or higher within the academy.

“Elder Thousand-Hands, I wish to request an audience with Qin Wentian. This request shouldn’t be too excessive, right?” A dark-skinned burly man looked towards Thousand-Hands, making his request.

“Thousand-Hands, I guarantee that I won’t take up much time. I only want to have a casual chat with Qin Wentian.” Another Elder gazed at Thousand-Hands as he requested.

Looking at so many figures appearing before him, Thousand-Hands felt slightly giddy. How could he not know of their intentions? Although Qin Wentian was already in the Emperor Star Academy, he had not yet claimed his Jade Medallion, which meant that he had yet to choose a teacher.

Although Mustang moved first, the rest of them still had a chance of roping Qin Wentian over to their factions.

“You bastards.” At this moment, an explosive voice roared, causing everyone’s voices to quiet down as they turned their heads, seeing Mustang’s black face.

Although the various Elders felt slightly embarrassed and awkward upon seeing Mustang, they maintained an expression of righteousness on their faces.

“Today is the last day of the ranking competition, and yet all of you came running here. How would the new students be able to choose their teachers? Right now, the vice-principal is raging and blowing his top, so you guys better go settle it.” Mustang coldly snorted. After Thousand-Hands brought Qin Wentian away, Mustang quickly discovered that almost all the teachers and Elders of the Emperor Star Academy had disappeared as well.

As the sound of Mustang’s voice faded, the various Elders and

teachers all departed, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

Thousand-Hands could only shake his head in resignation and bitterly smile. At least it was quiet now.

As he gazed at Mustang, Thousand-Hands stated, “Mustang, since the vice-principal is raging, it would be best if you quickly leave.

Smiling, Mustang replied, “Oh, he’s okay now. Anyway, would Elder Thousand-Hands permit me to meet with my student, Qin Wentian? I have something to tell him.”

Thousand-Hands froze as he considered Mustang’s words before chortling, “Mustang, the vice-principal was not even aware of the teachers’ disappearance, right?”

Since Mustang’s lies had been discovered, he involuntarily let out an awkward laughter. Thousand-Hands glared at Mustang as he replied, “Brutal indeed. Consider this your win. Fine, just go in.”

Note by Author: Many people asked why I still write it as the 3rd Heavenly Layer when it’s obviously the 5th Heavenly Layer. I beseech the readers to read carefully. In the earlier chapters, it was already stated that Qin Wentian used the needle techniques taught to him by Uncle Black to camouflage the radiance of his Astral Soul.

AGM 049 – Thousand Hand Imprint

Traces of laughter could be seen in Qin Wentian's eyes as Mustang approached. He stood up and respectfully called out a greeting, "Teacher Mustang."

"Sit." Mustang glanced at Qin Wentian as a smile too, broke out on his visage. Today, Qin Wentian had given him a great surprise.

"Qin Wentian, you do indeed have guts. To think that you dared to kill Orfon in front of so many people." Mustang continued, "The Ou Clan; they belong to one of the aristocratic clans and wield both great power and authority. I'm afraid that your killing of Orfon today, was too high profile, and they already have you on their radar."

"Didn't Teacher Mustang tell me, be it whether I kill or don't kill, that the authority and power of the Ou Clan would still remain unchanged?" Qin Wentian laughingly replied. Since Orfon had initiated this by trying to kill him in the Dark Forest, there could already be no compromises between the two of them. Naturally, Qin Wentian wouldn't expect mercy from the Ou Clan even if he had spared Orfon.

"That may be so, but it was still exceedingly dangerous before you released your Astral Souls, and displayed your talent. But thank god, all these turbulent waves have temporarily passed. Given how things stand now, even if the Ou Clan or the Ye Clan want to deal with you, they'll still have to consider the stance of our Emperor Star Academy."

Mustang laughed, “Naturally, your personal strength is still the most important factor, in any case, a spear in the light of the day is easily dodged, but an arrow in the dark is hard to defend against. If they want to kill someone, there’ll be countless methods for them to do so without leaving any traces behind. So it would be best for you to raise your cultivation and be extremely cautious whenever you need to leave the academy grounds.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Oh yeah, I’m here because I wanted to give you some information regarding the Emperor Star Academy. The history of our academy is even longer than that of the Chu Country. Our founder is known as the Viridian Emperor. It’s said that 3,000 years ago, there was only a handful of Stellar Martial Cultivators. Thus, the Viridian Emperor founded the Emperor Star Academy, heralding in a new age of Stellar Martial Cultivators.

Mustang continued, “Currently the Emperor Star Academy is fully helmed by Stellar Martial Cultivators. The upper management consists of the principal, 3 vice-principals, 9 supreme elders, 36 elders, as well as an unknown amount of guest elders. And as the rest of the school population, those are all students.”

“The students of the Emperor Star Academy are only considered to have graduated after they’ve stepped into the Yuanfu Realm. Although every new batch of applicants consists of a few hundred students, the majority require an extremely long amount of time before they can step into the Yuan Realm. Thus, once any of the students have graduated and stepped into the Yuanfu Realm, they will be able to become a guest elder of the academy should they

wish for it.”

“Even the guest elders are all at the Yuanfu Realm?” Qin Wentian was startled, the power of the Emperor Star Academy was too terrifying.

“Right, these guest elders were originally students under the 36 elders. After they graduated, there were some who still wished to remain in the academy for cultivation purposes. If that was the case, they would take on the title of a guest elder, aiding their respective teachers in guiding the new students. After all, in every batch of the new students, only the top 30 in the ranking competition would have the right to choose one of the 36 elders as their teacher. As for the rest of the students, they’d be taught and guided by the guest elders under one of the 36 elders.”

“Of course, don’t underestimate the guest elders. Some of the guest elders have already far exceeded their original teachers in their cultivation.” Mustang smiled as he introduced facts of the Emperor Star Academy to Qin Wentian and Fan Le. Both of them understood. If in the future, Senior Sister Luo Huan or Senior Brother Mountain stepped into the Yuanfu Realm, they’d be able to choose to become a guest elder under Mustang.

“I haven’t accepted any students from this new batch of students yet. Both of you, would you be willing to study under me?” Mustang looked at both Qin Wentian and Fan Le, finally revealing the intentions of why he had come.

Qin Wentian nodded his head in agreement. The entire reason that he’d come to the Emperor Star Academy in the first place was

because of Mustang. Naturally, he'd become a student under Mustang. However, Fan Le was fidgeting all about as his eyes flickered. He laughed, slightly deviously, before stating, "Boss, I think that the 36 elders of the Emperor Star Academy will be fighting each other to accept you as their students now. Why don't we put this matter on hold first, considering it slowly, as we accept the "Apprentice Gifts" from the various elders to gauge their sincerity?"

Mustang froze upon hearing the words of Fan Le and, looking at the wretched and shameless expressions on Fan Le's face, Mustang truly wanted to violently beat this fatty up. This Fatty actually wanted to extort the elders in broad daylight — how audacious!

Turning his head, Mustang saw that Qin Wentian was also grinning at him, causing his hatred of the fatty to increase. He took out two secret manuals from within his robes, passing it to Qin Wentian, as he replied, "One of these is a cultivation method, while the other is an innate technique. The cultivation method can be considered a top-tier cultivation art of the Yuanfu Realm, and is sufficient to support your cultivation all the way until you've stepped into the Yuanfu Realm. The innate technique can be considered an Earth-Grade, Mid-tier technique, and only cultivators at the Yuanfu realm will be able to truly unleash the full strength of it. Thus, it should be considered quite difficult to cultivate. Take them, let them be considered as the 'Apprentice Gifts'."

Cultivation methods could be segregated by their cultivation realms. For a Yuanfu-level cultivation method, it would be sufficient enough to support the cultivator to the Yuanfu Realm. For Heavenly Dipper cultivation methods, it would then be able to

support the cultivator enough to enable him to reach the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Innate techniques could be classified into 3 different grades with a total of 9 tiers. The 3 different grades stood for Human, Earth, and Heaven Grade. While the 9 tiers referred to low, mid, and top tier for each of the three grades. Human Grade techniques referred to those that were used by Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators, while Earth Grade techniques were for those at the Yuanfu Realm.

“Teacher, many thanks.” Qin Wentian, with no traces of politeness, accepted the two gifts, as he shouted the words “Teacher” with affection and passion, causing Mustang to roll his eyes. But soon, even Mustang couldn’t maintain his stern expression for long as he broke out into laughter. This matter with Qin Wentian was finally at an end.

“Ahem, teacher, how about me?” Fan Le winked his eyes at Mustang.

Mustang glanced at Fan Le, as he laughed loudly, “As for you, if you want to be my student, I think I will need to reconsider.”

“Don’t do this teacher, I know I was wrong earlier.” Fan Le’s countenance immediately sank heavily, causing Qin Wentian and Mustang to laugh uproariously. This fatty, he was really too shameless.

“Fatty, I already have a suitable cultivation method for myself, so this cultivation method is for you.” Qin Wentian passed the

Yuanfu Realm cultivation art to Fan Le, but kept the innate technique for himself.

“Thank you. What’s the innate technique?” Fan Le curiously asked, before Qin Wentian replied, “The ‘Thousand Hands Imprint’.”

“This innate technique set is extremely hard to cultivate in, and at the peak limit of this, the user will be able to unleash a thousand palm prints. It’s might can only be described as earth shaking. The Elder Thousand-Hands is famous because he cultivated this particular technique, and thus earned the nickname ‘Thousand-Hands’. Qin Wentian, you have to put in effort and study this.” Mustang earnestly reminded Qin Wentian.

“Right, I certainly will.” Qin Wentian inclined his head in agreement. He’d already achieved nearly complete mastery over the Dragon Subduing Fist, and as for cultivation arts, he had the Spiritual Refinement Method as well as the Dreamcast Art. Now that he had another innate technique, the Thousand Hands Imprint, it couldn’t be any better.

“These are Emperor Star Jade Medallions for both of you. You both should spend this month of imprisonment focussing on your cultivation. After both of you are released, I’ll get your seniors to fill you in with the current happenings of our Emperor Star Academy.”

Mustang departed soon after, while Fan Le went to study the Yuanfu-level cultivation art.

Qin Wentian flipped the pages of the 'Thousand Hands Imprints' manual. From the surface, this particular innate technique looked extremely simple. There was only five martial imprint methods: Diamond Imprint, Revolving Sea Imprint, Emptiness Imprint, Loneliness Imprint, and Great Thousand Hands Imprint!

The first martial imprint, Diamond Imprint, emphasized herculean strength and boundless might, the epitome of hardness. The 2nd martial imprint, Revolving Sea Imprint, referred to the endless waves of the revolving ocean tides — gushing forth with strength ever greater than the last, softness intermixing with hardness...all the way up until the Great Thousand Hands Imprint, where every time you struck out, the pressure and might unleashed by the thousand palm prints would be akin to the thousand-hands bodhisattva, overwhelming both heaven and earth.

“This Thousand Hands Imprint technique, although it possesses abnormal strength, consumes too large of an amount of energy. Using the Yuan Energy in your body to materialize a terrifying palm print and striking your enemies with it...” Qin Wentian murmured. This innate technique was powerful, but it expended too much energy.

“The Spiritual Refinement Method, Divine Imprints.” Qin Wentian suddenly thought of a remote possibility. The first level of the Spiritual Refinement Method required a first-level divine imprint to convert the Astral Energy in one's body into Divine Energy. If that was the case, if he used a first-level palm-shaped divine imprint to aid in the conversion of his energy, in addition to this Thousand Hands Imprint innate technique, wouldn't the strength unleashed be even more monstrous?

As he thought of this, Qin Wentian's heart started to pound with excitement. In his memories, there were indeed palm-shaped divine imprints. These type of divine imprints were primary used for crafting of glove-type divine weapons to increase attack power.

With this thought in his mind, Qin Wentian started to carry out his plans, and cultivated using the Spiritual Refinement Method.

This Spiritual Refinement Method was extremely tough to cultivate in, and depleted Astral Energy massively. It was only sufficient to inscribe a divine imprint using large amounts of Astral Energy, and after that, using some special methods, one had to compact, compress, and refine the Astral Energy into a single granule of Divine Energy, storing it within their acupuncture points. The duration of this entire process was extremely slow, and soon after, Qin Wentian gradually fell into the Shallow Dream State, as he condensed and refined the Astral Energy in his sleep.

In the Shallow Dream State, the rate by which one absorbed the Astral Energy from the 9 Heavenly Layers would increase by several folds. The rate of absorption would increase exponentially if one were to enter the Immersed or Forgotten Dream State. This could compensate for the long duration process cultivating using the Spiritual Refinement Method. Naturally, he would need more Yuan Meteor Stones to supplement it. After this one month of imprisonment, Qin Wentian would have to think of more methods to get the Yuan Meteor Stones to aid him in his cultivation.

As time passed, Qin Wentian slowly began to understand the essence of the Spiritual Refinement Method, and his speed

increased. Sometimes, he would stay in that sleeping state for three to four days before he woke up, cultivating in his dream state. This, of course, caused Fatty to be immensely bored, almost to the point of being driven crazy by boredom. He wanted to end the imprisonment fast, so that he could go out and mingle with the pretty students of the academy!

The time period of one month was nearing its end, and Qin Wentian had chose to sleep in the pavilion. The Astral Light cascaded downwards, falling upon his body, as he absorbed the boundless Astral Energy. In his Stellar Meridians, there were pulsating lumps of Astral Energy that were gathered together, and he continuously condensed the energy into a palm-shaped imprint, before compacting and refining it. In the end, he allowed it to flow through the completed circular pathways of the Stellar Meridians, and stored the Divine Energy within his acupoints.

During this month of cultivation, Qin Wentian had relentlessly cultivated using the Spiritual Refinement Method, perfecting the first level of it, and had mastered the concepts behind the Diamond Imprint. At the same time, he'd expanded his acupoints, enabling them to be able to store even greater amounts of Astral Energy. Once the expansion was at it's peak limit, would be the day where he broke through to the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Obviously, it was much harder to breakthrough to the next level in the Arterial Circulation Realm, compared to the Body Refinement Realm. He would need time to consolidate and gather Astral Energy. In just one month, the capacity of his storage ability had already risen by 6-7 times, compared to the time when he'd first broke through. But despite doing so, he was still unable to

connect the 2nd circular arterial pathway.

From this, one could see that the gulf between each level of the Arterial Circulation Realm was extremely vast. Qin Wentian could defeat Orfon because the explosive strength that he possessed was too great. But if they'd fought a protracted battle, he definitely would've lost, because the amount of Astral Energy that could be stored within his body was far too little in comparison.

AGM 050 – The Dreamsky Forest

Qin Wentian and Fan Le finally met Elder Thousand-Hands. During these past several days, there'd been people who'd delivered their food to them, however Elder Thousand-Hands had never appeared in front of them.

“Elder.” Qin Wentian respectfully stood up as he greeted.

“Hmm.” Thousand-Hands nodded his head, “Qin Wentian, the matter in the Dark Forest has already been clearly investigated. There was someone who was willing to be a witness, and stated that Orfon had indeed gathered others and attempted to kill you. As for the matter in the arena a month ago, the academy has already publicised that it was a personal grudge, and wasn't considered breaking the academy's rules. Other than this, you're currently ranked last among the new batch of students. Both of you have completed the imprisonment term of one month, and can leave this place as of now.”

After hearing the Thousand-Hands words, Qin Wentian broke out into a smile. It was absolutely forbidden to kill students from the same school within the academy grounds, but the disciplinary committee had actually just used the two words ‘personal grudge’ to explain everything. This was obviously showing favoritism and siding with him. This, Qin Wentian naturally understood. And moreover, this punishment couldn't even be considered a punishment at all. At most, this one month of imprisonment could only be considered as closed-door training.

Such obvious favoritism, even the blind could see. But still, this

was what reality was. As long as you displayed a sufficiently high talent, you'd be able to receive a grand level of treatment such as this.

“Thank you, Elder.” Qin Wentian thanked him with a smile before bidding him farewell. After which, Fan Le and him both departed from that place.

The moment they came outside, a white blur of shadow jumped right into Qin Wentian's chest, and extending his tongue, Little Rascal began licking the Qin Wentian's face.

A charming silhouette stood in front of Qin Wentian, and when the owner of the charming silhouette glanced over in the direction of Qin Wentian, traces of flirtation could be seen flickering in her irises.

“Demoness.” Fatty's eyes displayed a bright glow, as he stared unblinkingly at Luo Huan. Her figure, hehe... Fatty was already salivating.

“Senior Sister.” Qin Wentian smiled as he stepped forwards. Luo Huan too, approached Qin Wentian, and as she linked her arms with Qin Wentian she laughed, “Little fellow, you're finally out.”

Qin Wentian only felt the extreme softness of Luo Huan's skin. He laughed bitterly, could she not tempt him so much? After all, he was only 16, a period where his hormones and blood were surging.

Fatty ran forward as he prepared to link his arms with Luo Huan on the other side, as he obediently called out, “Senior Sister.”

Luo Huan glanced at Fan Le, and froze when she realised that he was about to link arms with her, before she giggled softly.

“Senior Sister, I’m the brother of Qin Wentian.” Fatty initiated the introduction as he stepped even closer to Luo Huan.

Luo Huan laughed, as she willingly linked arms with fatty as well. That moment, an expression of absolute enjoyment appeared on the face of fatty. Fatty’s spring days were coming soon!

“Ka Cha.”

“Argh...” Fatty let out a shriek of agony, as he nearly fell to the ground, clutching his right arm, as a sheen of perspiration could be seen on his forehead.

As he inclined his head, Fatty could only see the backs of Luo Huan and Qin Wentian walking away. His tears almost seeped out. Both of them were brothers, but why was there such a difference in the quality of treatment... Weren’t brothers supposed to share weal and woe together?!

“Boss, wait for me!” Fan Le thickened his skin as he rushed forwards. It appeared that in the future, he would have to follow Qin Wentian to get scraps of other good fortune.

The Emperor Star Academy was incomparably vast. There was the Disciplinary Courtyard, the Elder's Courtyard, the Honor Courtyard, and the Student's Alliance. Naturally, there was only one Disciplinary, one Elder, and one Glory Courtyard, while the Student's Association were made up of groups of students who banded together. The four strongest student groups in the Emperor Star Academy were collectively known as the Asura, Heavenly Demon, Knight, and Greencloud Associations.

Other than this, there were three other places of extreme importance inside the Emperor Star Academy.

The first place, was known as the Heavenly Star Pavilion. The Nine Heavenly-Layer Star Pavilion was a place where countless cultivation arts and methods, and even innate techniques, were stored.

The second place was known as the Astral River Hall. In the Astral River Hall, there was a mysterious force and pressure that simulated the pressure Stellar Martial Cultivators would face when they were attempting to condense their Astral Soul. This place could be used to strengthen their focus and increase their affinity, allowing them to use the astral pressure to temper themselves, break past their limits, and condense Astral Constellations of an even higher heavenly layer.

The third place, was known as the Dreamsky Forest. This place was a vast, boundless, dreamscape, that was exceedingly mysterious. As long as one entered it, they would enter into a dreamlike state in that dreamscape. And what's more, the dreamscape was connected to all of the four great martial

academies in the royal capital. The Emperor Star Academy, the Royal Academy, the Divine Wind Academy, and the Seven Stars Martial Palace.

“Heavenly Star Pavilion, Astral River Hall, Dreamsky Forest.” Qin Wentian murmured in a low voice. His heart trembled with anticipation after hearing the introduction from Luo Huan. No wonder the Emperor Star Academy was the number one academy in all of the Chu Country – capable of causing youths from all over to travel thousands of miles just to have a chance to enroll in it.

“Senior Sister, what’s up with the Dreamsky Forest? Why is it connected to the other three great academies?” Qin Wentian curiously asked.

“The Dreamsky Forest was originally created by an extremely powerful figure of our Emperor Star Academy who was proficient in knowledge about dreamscapes. In the beginning, the Dreamsky Forest was only connected to the Emperor Star Academy, which allowed students to temper their skills through spars and fights without the fear of death. After that, the other three great academies implored that Senior for help. In the end, that Senior agreed because he felt that with even stronger students from the other academies entering the dreamscape, our Emperor Star Academy students would be able to benefit even more.”

Luo Huan continued explaining, “Hence, this formidable Senior went to each of the four great academies, and used a special innate technique to create a vast dreamscape, connecting all four of the great academies to it. This was extremely advantageous for them. Previous batches of students have all received immense gains, and

have heightened their combat abilities through the dreamscape that that Senior created. Not only that, within the ranks of students from the other academies, those with extraordinary talent love to challenge students from our academy through the Dreamsky Forest.”

“The heart of this Senior was extremely magnanimous, willing to benefit others as well as benefitting ourselves.” Qin Wentian laughed, “Since there’s no risk of death in the Dreamsky Forest, of course they would unceasingly try to heighten their combat ability by dueling with students from our academy.”

Traces of laughter were displayed upon Luo Huan’s visage, as she looked towards Qin Wentian, “Junior Brother, don’t you underestimate the Dreamsky Forest. That dreamscape causes you to enter a deep dream state, bringing your real body into an alternate reality. The battles and duels in it will still sap your Astral Energy, and, if you’ve tasted the sensation of death in that state before, definitely won’t be willing to taste it again.”

The countenance of Qin Wentian froze as he slowly nodded his head. Currently, he was also cultivating the Dreamcast Art – of course he knew of the alternate reality inside of dreamscapes. Especially in the 2nd and 3rd level of the Dreamcast Art; in the 2nd-level, the Immersed Dream State, his real body, instead of his consciousness, would enter the dreamscape. If he died in there, the sensation of death would be strikingly real. That feeling, would surely be extremely nasty to bear.

Based on the content of the Dreamcast Art, when he cultivated it to the 3rd level, the Forgotten Dream State, the dream would no

longer be a dream. If he died in the dream, he would, die in reality too.

The Dreamsky Forest... the strength within the dreamscape should roughly be at the 2nd level of the Dreamcast Art, similar to the effects of the Immersed Dream State. That Senior had created an entire, vast, spacious dreamscape, in order to aid the four great academies in their cultivation practices.

“Boss, should we first go to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion to choose some ultimate cultivation arts or innate techniques?” Fan Le’s eyes shined with a brilliant light, as he directed the question towards Qin Wentian.

With a light smile on her face, Luo Huan glanced at Fatty as she replied, “According to what I know, both you and Junior Brother Qin are both ranked last, out of the newest batch of students. Your Emperor Star Jade Medallion should still be at the first grade, which means that you’ll only be allowed entry to the first level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, which houses only the most mediocre cultivation arts and innate techniques.

“.....” Qin Wentian and Fan Le were depressed. To think that people of their calibre were ranked last amongst this batch of new students.

“How about the Astral River Hall?” Fan Le asked.

“Same thing, you’re only allowed entry to the first level.”

“Don’t tell me we can’t even enter the Dreamsky Forest.”

“There’s no limitations placed on the Dreamsky Forest, you can go there anytime.” Luo Huan laughed as she continued, “I’ll escort both of you to the place where you will be staying. As for if you should go or not to the Dreamsky Forest, you can make the decision then.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian and Fan Le both nodded their heads in agreement.

Luo Huan brought both of them to the place where students stayed. The houses provided were all extremely simplistic, causing Fan Le to sigh as he cast his thoughts back to during the time when they had been imprisoned. Was that a punishment, or was it a reward.

“All the new students from this batch have already moved in here, I’m afraid that there might not be any more rooms remaining.” Luo Huan smile lightly, as she continued leading the way. Their efforts were in vain, all the rooms seemed to be filled with people. In the end, they finally discovered a small house near the roots of an ancient-looking tree that was empty.

“The environment here isn’t too bad, you only need to walk a short distance before you arrive at the Dreamsky Forest.” Luo Huan laughed. The dorms for the new students were just to the back of the Dreamsky Forest. This was to allow for them to enter the Dreamsky Forest for training easily.

“Senior Sister, where are you staying at?” Fatty pitifully looked at Luo Huan, this small house was just too dilapidated.....

“Stop dreaming, you have to raise your Emperor Jade Medallion to the 4th grade before you have the right to choose other region to stay in.” Luo Huan replied, “Work hard!”

“How do we increase the grade of the Jade Medallion?” Fan Le asked. This was something Qin Wentian wanted to know as well. It appeared that in order to enjoy resources and benefits, one had to increase the grade of their Emperor Star Jade Medallion

“The grade of your Jade Medallion is determined by the Honor Courtyard. For new students, the Jade Medallion of those who are ranked below the top 30, they will remain at grade 1. From the 30th to the 4th rank, their Jade Medallion grade will be raised to grade 2. For the top three ranks, their Jade Medallion will be grade 3. Actually it's extremely simple if you want to increase the grade of your medallion. All you have to do is to direct a challenge at the students in the top 30 ranks. As long as your ranking replaces theirs, your medallion will level up as well.

“However, if you want to raise the level of your medallion from the 3rd grade to the 4th, you will need to transfer 100 pieces of 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones to the Honor Courtyard. From the 4th grade to the 5th grade, you will need to transfer 300 pieces of 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones, from the 5th to the 6th grade, a 1,000 pieces, from the 6th grade to the 7th.....”

“Stop.” Qin Wentian exclaimed, as he marvelled silently at the amount. From the 5th grade to the 6th grade, a 1,000 pieces of 2nd-

layer Yuan Meteor Stones were needed – did they wanted to frighten him to death?

Luo Huan giggled as she looked at Qin Wentian, “The Emperor Star Academy has to provide for so many people, where do you think they get the resources from? How could they depend on the elders to procure the resources, they will naturally depend on the students. This is a form of training as well.”

“But, this is too brutal” Qin Wentian mumbled.

“Brutal?” Luo Huan laughed, “a Jade Medallion at the 6th grade will allow you to enter the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. In there, there is peak-level, top-tier Yuanfu grade cultivation arts as well as top-tier Earth-grade innate techniques. The worth of a thousand 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor stones, is only equivalent to 10 3rd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones. If you think about it, the cost for upgrading the medallion, is not high at all.”

Qin Wentian froze as he heard the words of Luo Huan, and carefully considered them. It appeared that what she said was true. The 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was extremely useful for cultivators at the last three levels of the Yuanfu Realm. This special treatment was only available at the Heavenly Star Pavilion. A thousand 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones, could truly not be considered much.

Despite realizing this, Qin Wentian still felt somewhat depressed in his heart. In the past when he was in the Sky Harmony City, even a 1st-layer Yuan Meteor Stones would be considered a precious treasure. A 1st-layer Yuan Meteor Stone, other than

holding the possibility of allowing a Martial Cultivator to become a Stellar Martial Cultivator — in addition to how scarce resources were — used to be treated like a treasure. But it was totally different here at the Royal Capital. There was no comparison at all!

TL Note: I've checked the raws, Seven Stars Martial Palace used to be known as the Seven Stars Academy.

AGM 051 – Knight's Association

Fatty's eyes were spinning. To think that the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion actually contained peak-tier Yuanfu Realm Cultivation Arts. If that was the case, what about the 7th level, the 8th level, and.....the 9th level?

“Senior Sister, could it be that at the 7th level and beyond, there are Heavenly Dipper Realm cultivation arts as well as Heaven-Graded innate techniques?”

Luo Huan laughed, “Our Emperor Star Academy has existed for a few thousand years. It shouldn't be too surprising that there are Heavenly Dipper Realm cultivation arts in our collections. But as for the specific details, I'm not too sure. After all, I have never visited there before.”

Even with a Heavenly Dipper Realm-level cultivation art, there was no guarantee that someone would reach the Heavenly Dipper Realm just by cultivating it. The critical point was still dependent on the cultivator's talent. With a rich history spanning a few thousand years, it was indeed not surprising for the academy to possess Heavenly Dipper Realm-level cultivation arts and techniques.

“And moreover, could you even afford the cost of ascending to the 7th level?” Luo Huan lightly smiled, “Even if you can't get in the top 30 rankings among the new students, you could directly exchange Yuan Meteor Stones to raise the grade of your Jade Medallion. If you have insufficient Meteor Stones, you could take on missions provided by the Honor Courtyard in exchange for

raising the medallion's grade."

"A mission that's worth 1,000 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones, I don't even dare to imagine the difficulty involved." Fatty murmured, "I thought that the academy would give me free Yuan Meteor Stones for cultivation, but I was wrong...so wrong."

"The school provides you the best environment for cultivation as well as establishing a competitive atmosphere. If you can't fight for it, it just means that you're incompetent. If every student were to depend on the academy for cultivation resources, the Emperor Star Academy would no longer have the name 'Emperor Star Academy'." Luo Huan laughed, "Okay, it's time for me to leave. Enjoy your time here, there will be many surprises. And one last reminder: in the Dreamsky Forest, it is forbidden to interfere with the true bodies of other cultivators while their minds are in the dreamscape."

After saying this, Luo Huan departed. There were traces of unwillingness in Fatty's eyes, but he dared not follow after Luo Huan. In the end, he could only follow Qin Wentian's example, so he started cleaning up the little house where they would be staying at.

"Shall we go and take a look at the Dreamsky Forest?" Fan Le grinned as he asked Qin Wentian.

"Right." Qin Wentian agreed. He wanted to experience the mysterious Dreamsky Forest for himself.

After emerging from the house, they began making their way towards the entrance of the Dreamsky Forest. They gradually began to feel traces of sleepiness beckoning to them, causing them to feel somewhat drowsy.

“How powerful! The strength of the formidable senior who created the dreamscape should have already reached the peak of the Yuanfu Realm. I think that he even utilised the aid of various arrays and formations, in addition to his own strength, to create the dreamscape known as the Dreamsky Forest.” Qin Wentian speculated in his heart as he saw several figures in a state of sleep, lying beneath the ancient trees. This must be his fellow students, who had come to experience the effects of Dreamsky Forest.

“There’s a pretty girl over there” On the other hand, Fatty didn’t bother to think about the specific details. He had been glancing at his surroundings when he discovered a youthful-looking girl who had just entered into the Dreamsky Forest. She slowly sat down beneath an ancient tree and fell into a slumber.

Under Qin Wentian’s speechless gaze, Fatty ran directly towards the pretty girl, sat down beside her, and closed his eyes. This caused Qin Wentian to wipe a layer of sweat from his brows. This Fatty... was just too.....

The sense of drowsiness was getting increasingly thicker, Qin Wentian went to Fan Le’s side, and he, too, closed his eyes. Very quickly, he entered into a sleeping state.

In the dreamscape, Qin Wentian contemplated his surroundings. At this moment, he was actually in a city, surrounded by several

other figures.

Fan Le and that lady were not far away from him. Because they entered the dreamscape from the same area, their positions would not be too far off from each others once they were in the dreamscape.

“Hi, my name is Fan Le. Is this your first time entering the dreamscape created by the Dreamsky Forest?” Fatty asked the youthful-looking girl.

“No, I’ve been here a few times before. My name is Sheena. Actually, I’ve met you before. You were so impressive during the student ranking competition!” Sheena smiled as she glanced at Fan Le. That day, when Qin Wentian and Fan Le killed Orfon on the Arena, the incident had been witnessed by all the new students, which cause many of the new students to hold them in adoration.

“Oh.” Fatty appeared slightly embarrassed as he smiled shyly, “For the sake of my brother, even dying 10,000 times is nothing. Luckily, we got through that incident without mishap. I feel that our fates are somehow connected; to think that the first pretty girl I met in the forest would be you.”

Sheena’s cheeks reddened. She felt embarrassed after hearing Fatty’s words.

“Cough, cough.” Qin Wentian purposely coughed, breaking into their conversation. It was imperative that he save innocent girls from Fatty’s fiery clutches.

“Qin Wentian.” Joy blossomed on Sheena’s face as her eyes brightened. Qin Wentian had already become the most hotly discussed topic among the new students. Killing Orfon the day he entered the Emperor Star Academy with an Astral Soul at the 4th Heavenly Layer. This was unprecedented, making him the first in the history of the Emperor Star Academy to have such accomplishments.

As he noticed the expression on Sheena’s face, Fatty glared at Qin Wentian with hidden resentment. How dare Qin Wentian destroy the budding romance that was about to develop between him and Sheena!

“Sheena, could you explain to us more about this dreamscape?” Qin Wentian became startled he observed his surroundings. Those who condensed dream-type Astral Souls or cultivated dream-type techniques would be able to bring others into their dreamscape. The others that were brought into the dreamscape would still retain your own intention and will. Just like when he was cultivation the Dreamcast Art, he knew what he was going to do inside the dreamscape he created. It was exactly the same right now; everyone retained their will and intention, but what they had entered was a dreamscape created by the formidable senior.

This was the power of the dream realm!

“Right. We are inside the dreamscape’s City of Illusions. Once the students of the four great academies enter, they appear within this City of Illusions. Because a dream is still a dream, people can do as they please here, with no limits to restrain them. Thus, the city is

very chaotic. There are bloody battles and slaughters constantly taking place, especially between the four great academies. Since they seek to heighten their combat abilities, violent situations will frequently erupt.”

Sheena continued, “There are also people who love fighting for the sake of fighting. They usually go around challenging others.”

“How do we exit the dreamscape?” Qin Wentian asked. If this was the dreamscape he created, he could exit it with a slight intention of his will. But now that he was in a dreamscape created by someone else, exiting it would not be so easy.

“Do you see that extremely tall building?” Sheena pointed to a pagoda-shaped building with a height so tall that it appeared to reach the Heavens. In the distance, there was also other similarly shaped buildings.

“Beneath each of these buildings, there’s a door that will lead you out of the dreamscape.” With a smile, Sheena continued, “And other than using the exits, dying would allow you to exit the dreamscape. However, naturally, there’s no one would would be willing to ‘die’ in order to exit.”

“Boss, do you want to go and look for Senior Luo Huan. If that’s the case, why don’t you go now? I will accompany Sheena on your behalf.” Fatty involuntarily interjected after he saw Sheena focusing all her attention onto Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian glanced at Fatty, only to see Fatty kept winking at

him. Seeing this, Qin Wentian sighed silently in his heart. What a shameless fellow.

“Fine, I will go look for Senior Sister Luo Huan, you guys go along.” Qin Wentian decided to help Fatty for once and turned his body, departing from this spot. Sheena could only bring along Fatty as they went about the City of Illusions.

Although this city was extremely spacious, people could be found everywhere. Not only that, fighting could occur at any given moment.

“Huh?” At this moment, Qin Wentian furrowed his brows. His sharp senses told him that there was someone staring at him.

Qin Wentian gave no indications that he noticed and continued to randomly stroll around the streets while secretly walking in the direction of one of the pagoda-shaped buildings. This way, if there were any accidents, he could swiftly exit the Skydream Forest.

At the same time Qin Wentian felt that he was being spied on, Fan Le sensed it as well. His eyes narrowed before he turned to Sheena and stated, “Sheena, I’m sorry, I have something that I need to take care of, so I will need to return first. I will accompany you next time.”

Puzzlement shone on Sheena face, but she slowly nodded her head. “Alright, but our current location is quite far away from the exit. If you want to return, you have to walk in Qin Wentian’s direction.”

“Got it.” Fatty grinned as he walked away.

At this moment, several figures appeared in various corners. Fatty halted his steps. Knowing that he had been surrounded, his expressions grew unsightly.

“Knight.” Sheena trembled as she saw that the figures were all wearing the same style of clothing with the symbol of the Knight’s Association on it. These people were from the Knight’s Association, and it seemed that they wanted to deal with Fan Le.

“Fan Le, you have to quickly escape. They are from the Knight’s Association.” Sheena worriedly exclaimed. Fan Le could only smile bitterly. He wanted to escape, but all these figures had a cultivation level that was higher than his, so it was impossible to run away.

The members of the Knight’s Association inched closer and closer as Astral Spears materialized in their hands, gushing forth with killing intent. This caused the color of Sheena’s face to turn pale white. They wanted to kill Fan Le.

Far off in the distance, there were many individuals focusing their attention on that location. The students from the Emperor Star Academy all knew who Fan Le was, but they could only shake their heads and silently sigh in their hearts. This fellow was truly unlucky.

A raging wind billowed as more than ten knights from the Knight's Association dashed towards Fan Le. The strong wind that their movements created was so powerful that it threatened to tear apart space. In this situation, Fatty knew that he would die for sure. He shut his eyes and did not give even the slightest resistance.

“Argh.....”

A pitiful voice filled with heart-wrenching agony echoed out in the air, striking fear in the hearts of many as they looked in this direction. Many were shuddering violently in their hearts as they realised what had happened. His arms, legs, and almost every other part of Fan Le's body had been pierced through with Astral Spears. The only spots left untouched were his heart and his head.

Hence, Fatty, who expected to die, was kept alive in this half-dead state, suffering from an agony that was even worse than death.

“All of you are seniors from our Academy, why are you all doing this to him?” Sheena's face was pale, completely devoid of blood. Everyone within this group of people was a strong cultivator belonging to the Knight's Association. To think that they would do this to a new student...

“Do you want to try this too?” A pair of cold eyes gazed at her direction, frightening Sheena so much that she dared not to speak.

“How ruthless.” The spectators were all speechless. The Knight's

Association was one of the four strongest associations in the Student's Alliance, but they had actually done this to a new student.

This was an extremely ruthless action.

“F*ck, is this really a dream!?” Fatty gritted his teeth against the pain. Blood flowed profusely out of his body. Raising his head, he saw a figure standing on the roof of a nearby building, wearing the clothing of the Knight's Association.

Member of the Knight's Association—Orchon!

AGM 052 – The Pride Of Number One

Filled with an extreme coldness, Orchon's sharp gaze pierced through the air and landed on Fan Le.

He could still clearly remember the shame he felt a month ago when he dragged Orfon's body back to the clan, as well as his family's piercing gaze. Such a humiliation was something that he would never forget.

"Son of a bitch, you better make sure I'm dead; if not I will kill you sooner or later." Fan Le forced a grin as blood seeped out of the corners of his mouth, making him look extremely pathetic.

"Argh....." Fan Le let out another scream even before the sound of his voice faded. One of the knights twisted the long spear that was impaled in his body. Although it was just a dream, the pain and agony was so deep that it was carved into his bones and engraved deeply within his heart. He wish to die, but at this moment, he didn't even have the power to end his own life.

Hearing the screams of agony, Qin Wentian madly dashed towards Fan Le's direction. Beside him were several figures belonging to the Knight's Association, but they did nothing to stop him from approaching Fan Le. The figures followed closely behind Qin Wentian, almost as if they purposely wanted to see what his reaction would be upon seeing Fan Le's pitiful state.

When Qin Wentian finally arrived, Fan Le's entire body was already covered in blood. Near him, Sheena was trembling

violently; never had she thought that the dreamscape could be such a cruel and ruthless place.

“Fatty.” Qin Wentian’s eyes went red. Through immense efforts, Fatty turned his head. After he saw Qin Wentian’s figure, he grinned, “Boss, get out of the dreamscape and wake me up.”

“Don’t do it. He’s suffering from such a degree of injuries within the dreamscape; if he is forcefully awakened by external means, there would be terrifying consequences.” At this moment, several figures appeared on top of the nearby buildings. The one who spoke was none other than Luo Huan. Her gaze was directed at Orchon as she icily stated, “The Knight’s Association mobilised these many strong cultivators just to bully a new student. You really made me see the peak of shamelessness today.”

Orchon ignored Luo Huan. With his cold and arrogant eyes fixated on Qin Wentian, he replied, “I only want you to understand a simple truth: in this world, talent doesn’t mean everything. The days in the future are still long, so you better be prepared to open your eyes and see what reality is.”

“Kill!” Orchon spat out the word, and upon hearing the command, the knights all madly dashed towards Qin Wentian.

“Buzz.” Luo Huan and the rest immediately jumped off the buildings, and while in mid air, she looked towards Qin Wentian, “Remember this: inside the dreamscape, the best situation for a defeated opponent is death.”

Qin Wentian turned his gaze towards a cultivator who belonged to the Knight's Association and was rushing at him. Abruptly, he stepped forth with such strength that he caused the ground to tremble.

A terrifying spear light, akin to that of a malicious dragon, burst forth. Qin Wentian angled his body slightly, voluntarily allowing the spear to pierce right into his heart. At the same moment, he unleashed the tyrannical strength of the Dragon Subduing Fist, using the spear stabbed into him as leverage. He pushed the spear deeper into his body in order to get closer to the opponent, and his fist directly exploded the head of the knight. A moment later, Qin Wentian felt himself dying inside the dreamscape.

Even if he died, he had to pull one along with him.

“Hu.....”

Within Dreamsky Forest, Qin Wentian opened his eyes while deeply breathing in the air. His heart was palpitating rapidly. Just a moment ago, he had experienced death in the spatial realm. That feeling, even though he knew it was a dream, wasn't something that he would be willing to go through again.

Taking in a deep breath, Qin Wentian tried to calm his inner state of mind as he looked towards Fan Le, whose body was trembling violently. The facial muscles of his face were contorted, reflecting the fact that he was in immense agony.

“Fatty.”

Qin Wentian clenched both of his hands into fists. Seeing how much Fatty was suffering, there was pain in Qin Wentian's heart as well.

"Argh....." Fatty suddenly screamed. His eyes snapped open as his body sprawled to the ground. Drawing in huge breaths, his body continued shaking involuntarily.

"That son of a bitch." Fatty recovered after several moments before he raised his head. His eyes narrowed, glinting with a cold and murderous light.

"Is your body okay?" Qin Wentian asked as he looked towards Fatty with a slightly panicked tone.

"Don't worry, it's just a dream." Fatty grinned, appearing to be nonchalant about what had happened. However, the cold light in his eyes betrayed him. The events that occurred in the dreamscape were something he would never forget.

"We can't stay here, the drowsiness is setting in again. Let's leave first." Standing up, Fatty and Qin Wentian quickly walked towards the exit.

"How did you exit the dreamscape?" Qin Wentian asked.

"Senior Sister Luo Huan killed me herself. If not for that, I'm afraid I would still be there." Fan Le replied. "Today, the Knight's

Association really taught us an unforgettable lesson.”

“Indeed.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

Both of them returned back to the little house and rested. Afterwards, as they left their dorms, they discovered that many students were heading towards the exit of the new students dormitory area.

“Quickly, the Knight’s Association is clashing with the Greencloud Association. There will be a good show to watch!” An unknown student exclaimed. Qin Wentian and Fan Le locked their gazes for a moment before following the crowd. The lesson taught to them by the Knight’s Association earlier had already been engraved in their hearts.

After a short period of time, they arrived at an area within the Emperor Star Academy. Surrounded by crowds of people, two seniors of the academy were facing off against each other. A cold chill permeated the air.

“Orchon.” Qin Wentian’s gaze was immediately drawn to Orchon. It appeared that Orchon and the rest from the Knight’s Association had also left the Dreamsky Forest.

“Senior Sister Luo Huan is there as well.”

Facing Orchon were Luo Huan and the others. Apparently, they belonged to the Greencloud Association. Qin Wentian and Fan Le

inched their way closer over to the side Luo Huan was at.

“Senior Sister.” Qin Wentian shouted.

Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes glanced over in his direction and spotted the both of them. She smiled as she looked to Fan Le, “After you awakened from the dream, did you still remember what you experienced?”

“Unforgettable; it’s already engraved in my heart.” Fatty grinned.

“Good. Don’t blame Senior Sister for not telling you about the dangers of the Dreamsky Forest. Some things are better understood after personally experiencing them. Consider this a lesson from the Knight’s Association. Even though it was painful, remember that you are still students of the Emperor Star Academy. This is only the beginning. Know that the Emperor Star Academy is not a place for the weak.”

“I will only give the both of you some basic information. As for the rest, you will need to experience it for yourselves.” Luo Huan smiled. “Do you hate the Knight’s Association?”

“Naturally.” Fatty laughed.

“If that’s the case, then think of ways to trample them beneath your feet. If you don’t, you will be the one they will trample on, just like what happened inside the dreamscape.” Luo Huan

continued smiling, but now there were traces of wisdom contained within her smile.

“The Knight’s Association is really impressive for mobilising such a powerful force to ambush two new students inside the Dreamsky Forest.” Luo Huan turned her gaze upon the members of the Knight’s Association. In her gaze, one could see a cold light flickering about, similar to sharp swords.

“So what?” Orchon replied, looking at Qin Wentian and Fan Le with a cold face. He continued, “This is only the beginning.”

“Shameless cur.” Mountain’s temper soared as he roared at Orchon.

“You don’t have the qualifications to speak to me.” Orchon cast a glance at Mountain before shifting his gaze towards Luo Huan. The corners of his lips curled in a cold and unpleasant smile as he stated, “The conflicts and battles between the Knight’s Association and the Greencloud Association have been on-going for such a long time. Why don’t we stop it and try something new, settling the matter once and for all?”

“What do you mean?” Luo Huan asked.

“Our Knight’s Association recruited two new students. It seems that your Greencloud Association has started recruiting as well. Let’s have a four-man battle. How does that sound?” With a smile, Orchon looked towards Luo Huan, causing the expressions on Luo Huan’s face to turn unsightly. Everyone knew that the association

to which most new students were attracted to was, without a doubt, the Knight's Association. The reason was very simple: the members of the Knight's Association all belonged to aristocratic clans.

Ever since the Emperor Star Academy had been created, their only focus was to groom the strongest Stellar Martial Cultivators, disregarding everything else. The only thing that mattered was the individual's strength as well as his talent.

There were many rich and powerful clans residing in the Royal Capital. However, many of the descendants did not fit their aristocratic stereotype. In fact, among them, there were many elites who entered the Emperor Star Academy with the aid of cultivation resources. Eventually, as the number of the aristocratic students grew, they gradually to form a group, which became the foundation for the Knight's Association.

The establishment of the Knight's Association caused the Emperor Star Academy to be filled with a gust of aristocratic wind. This, in turn, resulted in the birth of the Greencloud Association. The Greencloud Association was made up of students of the Emperor Star Academy who felt that there shouldn't be an Association that solely consisted of members from aristocratic clans. They felt that the Emperor Star Academy should remain a place where everyone, regardless of backgrounds, could cultivate in peace.

And thus, within the four great associations in the Student's Alliance, the Knight's Association and the Greencloud Association had always been butting heads since day one because of their

different views,.

Actually, before the Knight's Association and the Greencloud Association were even formed, the Heavenly Demon Association had long existed within the academy. The Heavenly Demon Association was the association with the longest history.

Lastly, there was the Asura Association, the last of the associations to be established. They couldn't be bothered to care about other matters. In their minds, cultivation was everything, so members of the Asura Association were known for being harsh on themselves. Usually, they would be found within the Dark Forest undergoing life-and-death training with the demonic beasts and using the experience to temper themselves.

Among the four great associations, the Knight's Association was the wealthiest.

With the amount of wealth they had, it was a simple matter for them to increase the grade of their Jade Medallions.

It was precisely because of this that, among the new students, two out of the top three ranked individuals chose to join the Knight's Association.

They were: the first ranked, Murong Feng, as well as the third ranked, Du Hao. Murong Feng's cultivation level was at the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm while Du Hao's was at the 3rd level.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were apparently considered to be members of the Greencloud Association. Their cultivation level were both at the 1st level of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Orchon proposed this idea because their Knight's Association enjoyed an overwhelming advantage.

The silhouettes of two figures walked out from behind Orchon. They were none other than Murong Feng and Du Hao. Among this new batch of students, Murong Feng was deemed as the strongest, while Qin Wentian was deemed as the one with the highest potential. As they locked their gazes on one another, tension could be felt in the air.

“I acknowledge that with your talent, you may have the qualifications to stand before me in the future. But now, every time I hear your name being mentioned in the same breath as mine, it makes me sick to my stomach. Why does the Emperor Star Academy have so many idiots?” Murong Feng's words were spoken matter-of-factly, causing a great deal of commotion among the spectators.

Defeating all his opponents with ease...the words of first ranked Murong Feng, who was the same age as Qin Wentian, were filled his own sense of unwavering pride and absolute conviction.

AGM 053 – Battle Accepted

At sixteen year-old with a cultivation level at the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. In the entire Chu Country, such talent were considered to be at the peak of geniuses. Not only that, Murong Feng's Astral Souls were not weak neither. His first Astral Soul was condensed from the 2nd Heavenly Layer while his second Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Not only that, like Qin Wentian, he was a 'pure' Stellar Martial Cultivator. He only started to cultivate after he had condensed his Astral Souls, using a time span of only a year and the half to perfect his body and step into the Arterial Circulation Realm.

This type of talent were already considered very rare. Not everyone would be like Qin Wentian, who used the Astral Qi absorbed from the a constellation hailing from the 5th Heavenly Layer in addition to using the extremely brutal Tempered Thousand Hammer Refinement Technique to temper and refine his body. Of course, the final effect would be better by more than tenfolds when compared to the results of normal cultivation.

The intent behind Murong Feng's words was very obvious. Perhaps in the future, Qin Wentian would have the strength to stand against him. But now, he did not possess enough qualifications to even be mentioned in the same breath as him. Those who did so were nothing but fools in Murong Feng's eyes.

Qin Wentian didn't even glanced at Murong Feng. Naturally, it was not because of fear or terror. In truth, he didn't understand where Murong Feng was coming from and had no interest to understand it either. After all, no matter how monstrous Murong Feng's talent was, what did it have to do with him?

But currently, Murong Feng was representing the Knight's Association. Since this was the case, the situation was different now. It had everything to do with him. Especially since not long ago, Fatty was forced to undergo a baptism by torture. And thus, Qin Wentian looked towards Fatty.

"I make the decision?" Fan Le locked gaze with Qin Wentian as he inquired.

"I will stand by you regardless of what decision you make." Qin Wentian grinned.

"Naturally, let's f*ck them!" Fan Le smiled as he cast a glance at Luo Huan, "Senior Sister, since they want to play, let's play with them. As for the time, let's set it a month from now."

"Are you sure?" Luo Huan glanced at both Qin Wentian and Fan Le. Their opponents were truly going to be tough to deal with.

Fan Le shrugged his shoulders and laughed, "This Fatty me don't have so many Yuan Meteor Stones. If that's the case, I can only use this method to raise the grade of my Emperor Star Jade Medallion."

Students who were ranked among the top 3 were given the privilege to raise the level of their Emperor Star Jade Medallion directly to the 3rd grade.

“Since this was the case, why not raise it to the 4th grade in one go? Let’s add another two hundred 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones as a side bet for this battle. If you win, wouldn’t you be able to directly raise the level of your Jade Medallion to the 4th grade?” Orchon coldly replied after hearing Fan Le’s words. His words caused the surrounding spectators to gulp in a cold breath. Two hundred 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones. To the students, this number of Yuan Meteor Stones was a terrifying figure.

A hundred 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones was sufficient to raise the level of the Jade Medallion to the 4th grade.

Not only for new students, even the Knight’s Association consider this amount of Yuan Meteor Stones astronomical. However, they were confident that they would definitely win. This was a battle that would be without suspense; the outcome was already quite clear to them.

Luo Huan’s eyes narrowed. This amount would cause the Greencloud Association to be under a lot of pressure.

“We, the Greencloud Association, are still able to afford the side bet of two hundred Yuan Meteor Stones.” A youth beside Luo Huan laughed.

Luo Huan nodded her head as she glanced at Orchon, saying “I want to make it clear first. There are two points I want to address. First, Qin Wentian and Fan Le are not members of our Greencloud Association. Our Greencloud Association interfered solely because we can’t stand how despicable your Knight’s Association can be. A group of senior students bullying two new students, how

impressive. Secondly, for this bet, the Greencloud Association accepts. If they win, all the proceeds are to go the Qin Wentian and Fan Le. But if they lose, the losses would be shouldered by us, the Greencloud Association.”

“Thirdly, the Greencloud Association is different from the Knight’s Association; we would never use wealth as a source of recruitment. As for those who wanted join us for benefits, we will never accept them, even if they were someone with an extraordinary talent.” The youth standing beside Luo Huan added, the corner of his lips curling into a slight smile.

This was the Greencloud Association’s stance, their own way of doing things. When compared to the Knight’s Association, they were remarkably different.

This world, at its core, was a black-hearted world where pragmatism and benefits ruled everything. Why did they still have to bring this atmosphere into the Emperor Star Academy? The Greencloud Association, from the very start, was opposed to this idea.

“Foolish.” Orchon and the rest in the Knight’s Association also looked down on the members of the Greencloud Association. From their perspective, how could there be cooperation without benefits? All trust was build upon the foundation of reaping benefits.

“One month from now...the thought of it fills me with anticipation.” Orchon gathered the men of the Knight’s Association and left. Murong Feng deeply stared at Qin Wentian

and Fan Le as a weird look became plastered on his face.

“What gave both of you the blind confidence to accept the battle? If the rules of not allowing students from the same school to kill each other during combat was changed, it would be for the best.” Du Hao also felt strange. After leaving behind that sentence, he left together with Murong Feng.

“Senior Sister, you are the leader of the Greencloud Association?” Qin Wentian glanced at Luo Huan, astonishment in his eyes.

However, Luo Huan shook her head and laughed, “I’m in charge of the matters of Greencloud Association, just as Orchon was in charge of the matters of the Knight’s Association. The association Leaders are Yuanfu Realm seniors who remained within the academy. Why? Do you want to consider joining?”

“That’s insignificant. In any case, from today onwards, my first wish in the Emperor Star Academy is to make the Knight’s Association disappear from our academy without a trace.” A cold light flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes. He would definitely realize this goal.

“Right, it doesn’t matter if you choose to join the Greencloud Association or not. You guys have to make good use of this one month.” Luo Huan smiled lightly. In just one month, they had to defeat two of the top ranked students; the pressure was indeed immense.

“It’s time for me to work hard as well.” Fan Le groaned before saying, “Senior Sister, Boss, I will return to cultivate first.”

Glancing at the departing Fatty, Qin Wentian felt his emotions surging up. Earlier today, he could tell that the matter had deeply affected Fatty. Even if not for himself, for the sake of Fatty, he would try his best to increase his strength within this one month.

One month. The amount of time should be sufficient for him to step into the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. As for increasing his combat ability, he would need to depend on the Spirit Refinement Method as well as the innate technique, Thousand Hands Imprint. Both of these methods required colossal amounts of Yuan Meteor Stones to support him in his cultivation.

“Seems like I will need to make a trip down to the Divine Weapon Pavilion.” Qin Wentian murmured in his heart before looking to Luo Huan, “Senior Sister, am I allowed to leave the academy anytime I want?”

Luo Huan naturally understood what Qin Wentian was asking. Currently, Qin Wentian had offended the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan, but he was safe within the Emperor Star Academy. However, once he stepped out of the academy, was he still safe?

“Be more cautious.” Luo Huan smiled, “Try not to give people a chance to assassinate you. If they want to deal with you openly, they would still need to take the Emperor Star Academy into account.”

Luo Huan believed that the moment Qin Wentian stepped foot into the Emperor Star Academy, his name was already taken note of by the academy. If anyone wanted to harm him, they would still have consider the power standing behind Qin Wentian.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded. He, too, understood that being cautious would bring him no harm.

“Work hard, Junior Brother. Senior Sister has place all her hopes on you.” Luo Huan ruffled Qin Wentian’s hair, causing Qin Wentian to smile bitterly. Little Rascal suddenly appeared out of nowhere and leaped upwards. Landing on Luo Huan’s shoulder, it started licking her face.

“What a lecherous dog. Haha, let’s go.” Qin Wentian smiled, as he turned and departed. Little Rascal jumped down from Luo Huan and followed behind Qin Wentian’s figure.

A man and a beast walking on a path within the academy. The human inclined his head, causing the rays of the setting sun to fall upon his face, before breaking out into a light smile. Even in the darkest clouds, there was still a silver lining.

Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes sparkled with joy and laughter as she gazed upon the view of Qin Wentian’s back. Both of her Junior Brothers filled her with anticipation. When would they be able to shine as brilliantly as the radiant sun?

Countless pair of eyes observed the Qin Wentian’s departure. They wondered in their hearts: would this person, the first person

in the history of the Emperor Star Academy to kill another student in the ranking tournament, be able to defeat Murong Feng one month from now?

.....

Qin Wentian proceeded to the Divine Weapon Pavilion to look for Francis, who had two pieces of extraordinary good news to impart to Qin Wentian. The three divine weapons he'd forged earlier were withheld purposely and would be sold via auction after a period of time. The weapons were causing a huge storm of commotion.

The Divine Imprint inscribed by Qin Wentian were named the 'Origin' Divine Imprint. Not only could it boost the stats of the weapon, it had the additional effect of 'storing' Astral Energy before being unleashed in one blow, catching opponents by surprise. This ability could be used in moments of danger to save one's life. Furthermore, many curious weaponsmiths and divine inscriptionists who wanted to observe the effects and study the divine imprints were all attracted to the Divine Weapon Pavilion, and thus, each and every auction they held was swamped by crowds of people.

The second good news was that, ever since Francis's rank had been elevated, he had the chance to view the 2nd-level Divine Imprints belonging to the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Currently, Francis had already broken through the barrier and stepped into the ranks of a 2nd-level weaponsmith, further increasing his status.

To Qin Wentian, this was an extremely good piece of news. As

long as Francis continued studying the runic lines, comprehending the insights of his ‘Origin’ Divine Imprints, and using even better quality materials to forge 2nd-level divine weapons, the price that the weapons could be sold for would certainly continuously increase. At that time, even if he wanted to raise the level of his Jade Medallion to the 5th grade, it would still be doable. He would then be able to gain access to top-tier earth-grade innate techniques.

Qin Wentian worked together with Francis as they forged even more divine weapons, passing them over to the Divine Weapon Pavilion. At the same time, in exchange for the divine weapons, they requested an advance in Yuan Meteor Stones for Qin Wentian’s cultivations while he simultaneously studied and analysed the “Origin” Divine Imprints in his memory.

Half a month later, Qin Wentian and Francis, finally used the completed version of the ‘Origin’ Divine Imprint to forge 2nd-level Divine Weapons, passing them over to Yang Chen.

Yang Chen was tremendously excited. He immediately made the preparations for an auction to be held, including marketing and advertising. The news spread around the Royal Capital and caused a large wave of commotion.

As for Qin Wentian, he secluded himself and entered a period of ‘closed-door training’. The meridians, pores and acupuncture points in his body had already reached a limit in their expansion. This meant that all he lacked was a single step before he could breakthrough into the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

AGM 054 – Familiar Person

In the blink of an eye, three days had passed. Today was the day of the auction. Although it had been marketed as an auction, the Divine Weapon Pavilion currently lacked an actual space to conduct an auction. It was merely their tactic to drive up the price of the Divine Weapons. During the ‘auction’, they would take out rarer and more precious divine weapons to be put up for sale.

At this moment, crowds of people were swamping the second level of the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Luckily, the main hall of the Divine Weapon Pavilion was extremely spacious, so even if more people arrived, the spacious main hall would still be able to contain them.

There were many adventurers and risk-takers in the Dark Forest here today. Even if they couldn’t obtain the rumored ‘Origin Sword’, they could still do some window-shopping at the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Perhaps there was a weapon more suitable to them.

And of course, the struggle to obtain the Origin Sword was undertaken by many weaponsmiths.

Gretchen arrived at the Divine Weapon Pavilion today. She was different from the rest; regarding the ‘Origin Sword’, she had to obtain this at all cost. She needed an excellent Divine Weapon, and coincidentally, she heard of the rumours regarding the Origin Sword, which caused her heart to be moved. Other than this, if she could somehow obtain the sword for her master, Murin, to inspect, he would have a chance to be able to analyse and reverse-engineer

the insights of the ‘Origin’ Divine Imprint.

Accompanying Gretchen were a few of her fellow students. All of them were students belonging to the Royal Academy. After all, Gretchen, in addition than being Murin’s disciple was a student belonging to the Royal Academy.

Fan Le came today as well. For the past few days, Qin Wentian had not gone back to the academy, and thus, Fan Le knew that Qin Wentian would be in the Divine Weapon Pavilion. After making some enquiries and discovering that the Divine Weapon Pavilion would be auctioning the ‘Origin Sword’ today, he decided to come and look for Qin Wentian. Not only that, Sheena was accompanying him as well.

Francis and Qin Wentian were both in the crowd as well. They were eagerly anticipating the price that this mid-tier 2nd-level divine weapon would fetch.

“Boss.” At this moment, Qin Wentian heard Fan Le’s voice, and as Qin Wentian turned his head in the voice’s direction, he discovered that Fan Le came together with Sheena, which caused him to break into a smile. “Fatty, it’s good that you’re here.”

“I’m only here because I’m curious.” Sheena replied somewhat bashfully.

“Sheena is a very shy person, you better not talk nonsense.” Fatty laughed, “However, she is somewhat interested in the Origin Sword.”

“Oh?” Qin Wentian cast a glance at Sheena, only to hear her saying, “My 2nd Astral Soul is a sword-type Astral Soul. I know I will probably not be able to afford the Origin Sword, so I’m here to look for other suitable weapons.”

As she was speaking, Sheena shifted her gaze onto the sword wall in the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Over there, there was a divine sword hanging there, emitting a resplendent glow. Naturally, one would be unable to judge from its surface appearance if the divine weapon was exceptional or garbage.. One could only sink their Yuan Energy into the weapon in order judge the quality for themselves.

“Good sword.” At this moment, a voice drifted out from the crowd, causing the multiple gazes to be focused onto the owner of the voice. The voice originated from a youth who was holding onto a huge wine cask. His appearance caused smiles to involuntarily break out on the faces in the crowd.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, how do you know whether a sword is good or not without touching it.” Someone laughed.

“Instinct.” Immortal Drunken Sword put down the wine cask as he shook his head, “You wouldn’t understand.”

“Haha.” Looking at the Immortal Drunken Sword’s behavior, many people laughed. Qin Wentian laughed as well. This fellow, he was truly unusual and interesting.

“He is Immortal Drunken Wine.” Sheena’s eyes glimmered as she looked at Immortal Drunken Wine.

“You know him?” Qin Wentian asked.

“Among the ten prodigies in the Royal Capital, he is ranked third. It would be strange if I hadn’t heard of him before.” Sheena stated. This caused Qin Wentian to be somewhat startled. This youth who was so in love with his alcohol was actually ranked third among the ten prodigies.

“The ten prodigies of the Royal Capital refer to the most elite youths in the Royal Capital below the age of 20; their status are all extraordinary.” Sheena was somewhat astonished. The third ranked Immortal Drunken Wine, why did it felt as if he was too amiable and easygoing?

At this moment, Qin Wentian only felt a chilly stare being directed at him. Turning his head in the direction of the gaze, his eyes narrowed.

“Francis, it’s you.” Gretchen never expected to run into Qin Wentian and Francis at the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Previously, after the incident at the Sky Harmony City, the Ye Clan had delivered a substantial amount of resources over to the Star River Association. These resources prompted Murin to allow her to go into ‘closed-door seclusion’ within the Star River Association. Within the seclusion, Gretchen smoothly broke through the bottleneck of 1st-level weaponsmith and stepped into the ranks of a 2nd-level weaponsmith, causing her status in the Star River Association to rise greatly.

She had returned to the Royal Academy a few days ago, and those beside her, after knowing that she was now a 2nd-level weaponsmith, started to try various ways to get closer to her and improve their relationship.

A 2nd-level weaponsmith would never have to worry about connections and riches. Not only that, such a young 2nd-level weaponsmith as Gretchen would have a limitless future. If she later became a 3rd-level weaponsmith, she would become a figure that even Yuanfu Realm cultivators would have to be courteous to.

The Divine Weapon Pavilion possessed matchless authority within the Royal Capital. Because they had several weaponsmiths closely allied to them, the wealth of the Divine Weapon Pavilion had already reached extremely terrifying proportions. In this world, wealth meant cultivation resources. With sufficient cultivation resources, there would naturally be strong cultivators.

“Hmmp.” Francis coldly snorted upon meeting Gretchen. The things that Murin had done were forever etched in his mind. As for Murin’s disciple, she was too overbearing and arrogant.

“The two of you actually ended up sticking with each other?” Cold light flickered in Gretchen’s eyes as she considered the two of them. “Snakes and rats belonged to the same hole indeed.”

“Boss, who is this woman?” Fan Le looked at Qin Wentian. Fan Le’s shameless gaze had roamed around Gretchen’s body, causing Qin Wentian to silently sighed in his heart. As long as the other party was a woman, this fellow would definitely be interested. But of course, Gretchen had her charms as well.

Despire of this, Qin Wentian's impression of Gretchen wasn't anything good. Qin Wentian could still remember that prideful look of arrogance on the day when Murin had forced him to make a choice in the Star River Association. To Murin and his disciple, it was an honor for Qin Wentian to be invited Murins' student.

"She's the disciple of a despicable man from the Star River Association," Qin Wentian replied.

"Impudent." Gretchen's expression turned chilly, "How dare you insult my teacher. Are you courting death?"

"You are the impudent one. Are you afraid of admitting what Murin has done?" Francis coldly replied, "Back when I was still in the Star River Association, Murin forcefully snatch my 2nd-level divine imprints away. Is it wrong to say that he is a despicable man?"

Gretchen examined Frances. She had never expected that last year's lowly, soft-spoken Francis would actually dare to insult her esteemed teacher, Murin.

"Dog slave, unless you go down on your knees and apologize, you can forget about leaving here alive today." Gretchen directed her arrogant gaze towards Francis. In her eyes, Francis was but a slave, but he actually dared to insult her esteemed teacher in front of her. If she did nothing and allowed news of this matter to reach her teacher, wouldn't that be slapping herself in her face? It would be extremely embarrassing for her.

The expression on Francis's face turned extremely unsightly when he heard Gretchen's words. All his life, Francis had always maintained and adopted a respectful demeanor when dealing with people of higher ranks. Even when he was insulted or humiliated, he would still greet them with a smile. But today, the one who was insulting him was actually a girl in her teenage years.

"Indeed, the student takes on the characteristics of the master." Qin Wentian exclaimed as he surveyed Gretchen. "As for what Murin did to me, the word 'despicable' is still far from enough to describe it."

Gretchen's gaze shifted to Qin Wentian. She observed him with cold, prideful eyes. A strange smile appeared on her face, and she made no attempts to mask her contempt.

"I truly do not understand. What give you the confidence to utter these words? I hope that you won't flee before this auction is concluded."

After saying this, Gretchen's gaze shifted to the sword wall in front of them as a cold light flickered in her eyes. The three person who accompanied Gretchen all had hints of ridicule in their eyes, and they too looked towards Qin Wentian and Francis. Didn't the two of them know how tall the Heavens were? To think that they would offend such a young 2nd-level weaponsmith. Not only was she a genius in weapon forging, she was also a member of the Guan Clan who studied at the Royal Academy.

“Boss, that girl’s cultivation level is quite ordinary, only at the 3rd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. And as for the three guys behind her, two of them are at the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm, but the remaining one is quite troublesome to deal with. He has already reached the 5th level of Arterial Circulation.” Fan Le whispered. If they really had to fight, it was better to understand the strength of their opponents first so that they could prepare for all possibilities.

Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head, as Fan Le grinned, “If we really have to fight, both of us will join hands and instantly destroy the girl before the other three have a chance to react.”

“You broke through?” A brilliant light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes after hearing Fan Le’s confident words.

Winking, Fan Le said with some satisfaction, “Even you’ve already broken through to the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Is it really that surprising that I broke through as well?”

A few nights earlier, Qin Wentian’s capacity to store the tyrannical Astral Energy he absorbed had reached its limit, but he managed to open up his 2nd completed circular Arterial Stellar Meridian pathway. Currently, he was able to store even more Astral Energy, and because he now had two completed meridian pathways, both his senses as well as his attacks and defense abilities had been dramatically raised to new heights.

“Why do your words make it sound like you think that I can’t be compared to you?” Qin Wentian asked, curiosity evident in his voice.

“No no, don’t be mistaken, I’m just lost in my thoughts.” Fatty grinned, and his eyes sparkled with a bright light, “Ten more days, I’m so excited! 200 Yuan Meteor Stones! With such a large amount of Meteor Stones, the Knight’s Association will surely feel the pain of losing the bet!”

AGM 055 – Friends And Enemies

Qin Wentian couldn't wait for the battle ten days from now. Currently, he and Fan Le had both broken through to the 2nd level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. With Fan Le's Empyrean Flames Bloodline, dealing with Du Hao shouldn't be too much of a problem.

And as for Murong Feng, he was a thornier problem to handle. Not only was his cultivation at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation, Qin Wentian was unsure of what other trump cards Murong Feng might possessed, and as such, during these ten days, Qin Wentian had relentlessly pushed himself. He wanted to refine at least half of the Astral Energy within his body into Divine Energy. Only then would he be able to depend on the Divine Energy within his body, as well as his middle-tier earth-grade level innate technique Thousand Hands Imprint, to clash against someone at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation.

The problem now was that in these ten days, Murong Feng would not remain idle. The Knight's Association would definitely do their best to prepare him for the battle.

To refine so much Divine Energy, Yuan Meteor Stones are a necessity. Qin Wentian would surely have enough after auctioning away the Origin Sword.

At this moment, Sword-Dance walked forwards to the wall of swords. She turned her gaze to the audience and smiled, "The same traditional rules apply: everyone can bid in the auction. The highest bidder will obtain an advantage, but ultimately, the

decision to sell the sword still lies with our Divine Weapon Pavilion. I believe that everyone here has heard about the Origin Sword, correct? The minimum bid will be set at ten 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones.”

The corners of Sword-Dance’s mouth curled upwards in a smile, but inwardly, her heart still involuntarily trembled at the minimum price. Ordinary 2nd-level divine weapons would only cost around three to four 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones, but this Origin Sword...she didn’t dare imagine what price it would reach at the end of the auction.

Naturally, for those whom the Divine Weapon Pavilion wanted to forge a closer relation to, the Divine Weapon Pavilion would retain the right to sell the sword at a lower price. This was their standard way of conducting business.

“Now, let the auction begin.” Sword-Dance smiled.

“30 stones.” A calm voice drifted out from the crowd. An old man walked forth, approaching the sword wall.

“It’s old man Han! It seems like we don’t have an ounce of hope left.” Many people cursed in a low voice. The initial bid was already 30 Yuan Meteor Stones. This amount stopped many in their tracks, crushing their hopes into smithereens.

“This sword, I really love it! However I only have 35 Yuan Meteor Stones with me right now. I shall bid it all, let’s hope my luck is good.” Immortal Drunken Wine exclaimed as he, too, approached

the sword wall.

“40 stones.” The silhouettes of a few others appeared near the sword wall. These were none other than Gretchen and her group. The price of the sword was now boosted to an unimaginable height.

“F*ck! I, your father, took so many life-threatening missions and hunted countless demonic beasts. I’ve danced with death for ten over years before I finally saved up my entire fortune, worth about ten 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones. Excellent, truly excellent.” A burly man cursed, causing many to nod in agreement with his words. The disparity of wealth was too great.

(TL: The old man is not Gretchen’s father. It’s just a derogatory phrase often used to establish seniority or superiority)

Qin Wentian silently agreed. This was the Royal Capital. Were it the Sky Harmony City, there wouldn’t even be an exchange of 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones in the market. Even 1st-layer Yuan Meteor Stones are hoarded by the larger clans as priceless treasures. They would usually only use Yuan Stone for transactions. This, truly, was the disparity of wealth.

Gretchen’s bid caused everyone to fall silent. An extremely important auction did not need to be bombarded by countless calls from the bidders. Sometimes, a priceless treasure only needed a few calls before it was sold. The rest of the audience would merely serve as a background in order to showcase the bidder in greater brilliance.

However, Qin Wentian naturally had no wish to act as such a 'background'. Since Gretchen was so wealthy, he would be sure to take advantage of that and con her.

"Lass from the Guan Clan, I heard that you have already broken through and are now a 2nd-level weaponsmith. This old man is truly impressed. I shall not bid against you." Old man Han courteously exclaimed. He was also a 2nd-level weaponsmith.

Gretchen merely inclined her head in the direction of old man Han with no intention to thank him. After all, the number of people who wanted to bootlick her was too many to count.

"41 stones." Qin Wentian strode forwards, calmly calling out. The hints of a smile could be seen upon his face.

Immortal Drunken Wine almost spat out the wine he was drinking when he heard this. Soon after, laughter sparkled in his eyes. Of course he knew that Qin Wentian was the one who had crafted this sword. Immortal Drunken wine could tell that this fellow was planning to con the girl out of her Meteor Stones..

Gretchen froze as she looked towards Qin Wentian with ice in her gaze. "What nonsense are you attempting?"

"Are you bidding or not?" Qin Wentian cast a glance at Gretchen.

"45 stones." Gretchen glared at Qin Wentian before spitting out

her bid.

“46.” Qin Wentian grinned while continuing to bid.

“Are you not afraid that the Origin Sword might burn your hands if you obtain it?” One of Gretchen’s companion spoke, his eyes filled with a threatening light.

“That’s of no importance to me. After I win the auction, I can give this sword to another cultivator as a gift. For example, I can give the sword to Immortal Drunken Wine. Actually, it doesn’t matter who I give it to. It’s just that I have too many Yuan Meteor Stones to spare.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders.

“You.....” That person’s countenance sank. Gretchen turned to Sword-Dance, “Do you want to check if he has that many Yuan Meteor Stones with him before we continue the auction?”

“Miss Gretchen, you don’t need to worry about this. This is a matter of my Divine Weapon Pavilion. Or could it be that Miss Gretchen is willing to retrieve all the Yuan Meteor Stones on you to show everyone your wealth? If you want to, I wouldn’t mind.” Standing beside Sword-Dance, Yang Chen gave a slight smile, Hearing Yang Chen’s rejection, Gretchen’s expression turned unsightly.

“50 stones.” Gretchen coldly replied.

“51.” Qin Wentian directly quoted.

“55.” Gretchen gritted her teeth. After she broke through and became a 2nd-level weaponsmith, the Star River Association and her clan had gifted her a number of resources to aid her in her cultivation. In addition to her previous savings, she had a total of 60 Yuan Meteor Stones on her body. But currently, she was about to exhaust all her savings just to acquire this Origin Sword.

“56.” Fatty grinned as he took over from Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian cast a glance at Fatty, his smile growing even wider. Fatty possessed the power of thought, bestowed upon him by his Astral Soul. And as a result, he had extremely accurate judgement and would perhaps deduce something from Gretchen’s expression.

“57.” The coldness in Gretchen’s voice reached its limit. In the future, Yuan Meteor Stones were a resource that she would not lack. But today, she would rather die than to lose face. As for Qin Wentian, she would deal with him at her leisure after she obtain the Origin Sword.

“58.” Fatty’s smile got even more radiant.

“60.” Gretchen choked. The entire crowd went silent. She actually bided 60 Yuan Meteor Stones for the Origin Sword. What a crazy price! She was mad! Everyone was mad!

“Tsk tsk, pretty lady, you are really wealthy, I can’t afford to raise my bid anymore.” Fan Le displayed a shameless smile on his face as he looked at Gretchen. Gretchen froze. She spent 60 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones just to buy a 2nd-level divine weapon.

Even though the sword was extraordinary, her heart was still bleeding.

“I can’t afford to as well.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders and winked at Fatty. Just like that, he obtained 60 Yuan Meteor Stones.

“Boss.” Fatty shot over a ‘you know that I know’ glance at Qin Wentian, reminding Qin Wentian not to forget about his help.

“Are there any more bids?” Sword-Dance smiled at the crowd.

“Bid, my ass! The price is too high, I think I will just go to the 1st level and choose a weapon from there.” Someone started spewing vulgarities, causing the crowd to laugh. Indeed, this price was too terrifying. 60 Yuan Meteor Stones were sufficient to purchase a plethora of 2nd-level divine weapons.

“Since that’s the case, Miss Gretchen, please make your way here so that we can finish the transaction.” Smiling, Sword-Dance gazed at Gretchen. Gretchen’s heart slightly twitched as she passed over her entire fortune of Yuan Meteor Stones to Sword-Dance. It was only after receiving the payment that Sword-Dance handed the Origin Sword over to her.

“Hu.....” Gretchen finally obtained the Origin Sword, but she felt no joy in her victory. She coldly looked over at Fatty and Qin Wentian, her eyes filled with killing intent.

“Now, it’s time to settle the score between us.”

“How do you want to do it? One on one? Group Fight?” Fatty narrowed his eyes as he replied.

After hearing Fan Le’s words, Gretchen and the three individuals behind her burst into laughter, as if they had just heard the funniest joke on earth.

“One on one, group fight? Are you even qualified?” The strongest cultivator that sided with Gretchen stepped forth, casting a glance at Fan Le. “If you all kowtow to Gretchen and beg for mercy right now, I will spare your lives today.”

Wang Chong’s gaze was filled with traces of malice. He truly had trouble understanding why this bunch of people wanted to set themselves against Gretchen. But at the same time, he was glad because of it. If not for them, he would have no chance to showcase his worth. One must know that after Gretchen became a 2nd-level weaponsmith, there had been countless people trying to improve their relationships with her.

“Screw off.” A lazy voice echoed out, causing Wang Chong to stiffen. Who in the world actually dare to ask him to screw off?

He shifted his gaze, searching for the source of that voice. Unexpectedly, his vision landed on a youth that was drinking from his wine cask.

Wang Chong's expression froze. Even the color of his face turned green.

"Immortal Drunken Wine, this matter is none of your business." Wang Chong coldly stated.

"I'm making it my business, is that okay?" Immortal Drunken Wine grinned, "Even if I don't tell you to screw off, there would surely be others telling you the same words. Leave the grudge between them and Gretchen for them to settle. If you want to make a move, I can guarantee that the one kneeling today will definitely be you."

After saying this, Immortal Drunken Wine shook his wine cask before sighing in depression, "Damn, I ran out of wine again."

The crowd went speechless. This fellow..... Was he drunk or not? His replies shifted too quickly from one topic to another.

"After this matter is settled, let me treat you to some wine." Qin Wentian smiled as he spoke to Immortal Drunken Wine.

The eyes of Immortal Drunken Wine immediately sparkled. He laughed, "Those are your words. Don't run away later, I can really drink a lot."

"Drink until you are drunk." Qin Wentian laughed along. He truly liked the personality of this Immortal Drunken Wine.

“Right, seems like today, I’m really in luck.” Immortal Drunken Wine was filled with anticipation. He knew that from today’s proceeds, 30 stones would belong to the Divine Weapon Pavilion while the other 30, would go into Qin Wentian’s pocket.

AGM 056 – Orchon's Plan

The two of them chatted as if there were no one else around, causing the expression on Gretchen's face to sink even further. She had never thought that Immortal Drunken Wine would actually help Qin Wentian.

Third ranked among all the ten prodigies in the royal capital, he wasn't someone she could afford to antagonise.

"To think that you found yourself a backing so quickly." Gretchen snorted. "But do you really think that I require external help to deal with the likes of you?"

Murin and Gretchen, back when they were in the Sky Harmony City, had already investigated Qin Wentian's background. That time, Qin Wentian revealed an above average talent by condensing an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. They speculated that he used a special technique to kill Ye Lang. Now, three months had passed. Even if Qin Wentian had made some improvement, how much could he have improved by?

As for the demonic ape that appeared before, Murin told her that it should be an Astral Beast summoned with the aid of a life-protecting treasure left by the Qin Clan's Ancestor.

"A clan that's declining, what genius can it possibly produce?" Gretchen laughed coldly as she turned to leave, "Let's step outside."

Although Gretchen was wildly arrogant, she wasn't stupid enough to start a fight inside the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

Gretchen's companions all had a mocking expression on their faces as they let out a laugh. Qin Wentian truly did not know the difference between life and death.

"Interesting." The crowd watched the spectacle unfolding. Qin Wentian and his companions started to leave as well when he suddenly looked towards Francis, who was beside him, as he asked, "Are all weaponsmiths this wild and unbridled?"

"For high ranking weaponsmiths, even their bones stink of arrogance." Francis smiled, "Back then, I was only a 1st-level weaponsmith but I already had an air of arrogance. You've witnessed my character before....."

After saying this, Francis seemed slightly embarrassed as he looked at Qin Wentian

Qin Wentian laughed. in the past, when he just met Francis, Francis had indeed been overwhelmingly arrogant.

As they exited the Divine Weapon Pavilion, Gretchen trained her gaze on Qin Wentian. A cold light flickered in her eyes. Earlier, Qin Wentian had purposely competed with her in order to cause the bidding price to shoot up, which made her suffer huge losses. Just this point alone was sufficient for Qin Wentian to compensate her with his life.

“She wants to kill you.” Fan Le narrowed his eyes. This woman was not simply arrogant; her heart was also akin to a poisonous viper. To think that she had thoughts of killing Qin Wentian just for what had happened earlier.

“Buzz.” Abruptly, Gretchen’s body flickered. Her body was like a feather floating in the wind, light and nimble, with a movement as fast as lightning. A sword light filled with an icy chill flashed as it shot forth, heading straight towards Qin Wentian’s body.

“What a swift sword.” The spectators’ expressions froze. Gretchen truly intended to kill Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian’s palms began emanating a surge of terrifying pressure. After practicing the Thousand Hands Imprint for so long, it was now time to test its might in actual combat.

The ground trembled as Qin Wentian took a step forth. With an explosive energy surging through his body, he struck out with one of his palms. That terrifying palm print exuded a tyrannical, domineering strength and flickered with a golden light. This was the first palm imprint of the Thousand Hand Imprint—the Diamond Imprint.

Gretchen’s sword, which had been coalesced from Astral Energy, immediately shattered. Even before the might of her swordplay could be brought out fully into play, it had already been completely suppressed by the strength of the Diamond Imprint.

The Thousand Hand Imprint was originally an innate technique

that was famed for its domineering attacks. Not only that, the Astral Energy in Qin Wentian's body originated from the 5th Heavenly Layer, and in addition to the boosting effects granted to him via his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul, the strength of his normal attacks were already at a monstrous level even without utilizing Divine Energy.

“Boom. boom!” Qin Wentian stepped forth, dashing towards Gretchen. Simultaneously, both of his palms struck out with mighty pressure. Gretchen's countenance instantly turned pale white, and she immediately swung out with the Origin Sword while releasing a sword-type Astral Soul at the same moment.

The sword light she released formed into the shape of the character “chop” as it forcefully chopped against one of the Diamond Palm Imprints, smashing it into smithereens. As for the other palm imprint, Gretchen had no other alternatives but to hurriedly extend her palms to meet the attack head on.

A thunderous sound echoed out as Gretchen felt the bones in her arms shattered. Fresh blood seeped out of the corners of her mouth.

Qin Wentian had no intentions of giving Gretchen the chance to fight back. Draconic roars rang out in succession as the claw of a azure dragon materialized, knocking the Origin Sword out from Gretchen's hands. Meanwhile, Qin Wentian's other fist explosively punched into Gretchen's body, causing her to be flung into the air before brutally landing on the ground.

The battle ended in an instant. The nearby spectators were all

stunned by the brutal display. This fellow gave no quarters whatsoever. After he had seized an advantage, like a raging storm of wind and rain, he immediately went all out, destroying Gretchen.

Wang Chong and the rest rushed forwards, only to see Immortal Drunken Wine stepping out. A monstrously sharp sword Qi permeated the air and caused Wang Chong and the rest to halt in their steps.

As all of this was happening, Qin Wentian had already arrived at Gretchen's side. Standing there with his gaze riveted on her, the corners of his mouth broke into a slight smile. In his hands, he wielded the Origin Sword that Gretchen had dropped. As long as he lightly pierced downward, Gretchen would definitely die.

"I truly don't understand the qualities you possess that enable you to be this arrogant." Qin Wentian calmly stated. The questioning gaze pierced directly into Gretchen's heart. She had never suffered such humiliation before.

However, since she lost to her opponent, Gretchen had nothing to say.

The pain of defeat, as well as this humiliation, was extremely intense indeed.

"Immortal Drunken Wine, if something really happened to Gretchen, I'm afraid that even you would not be able to withstand the backlash." Wang Chong coldly looked the figure blocking him

before shifting his gaze at Qin Wentian. “And you, remove your sword.”

With a smile, Immortal Drunken Wine said, “If I were you, I would shut up right now. If he really killed Gretchen, it wouldn’t be too good, would it?”

“Gretchen is a member of the Royal Academy, as well as a 2nd-level weaponsmith belonging to the Star River Association.” Wang Chong icily stated.

“A month ago, he killed Orfon in front of several elders of the Emperor Star Academy as well as in front of Orchon himself. If he kills her, don’t say that I didn’t tell you.” Immortal Drunken Wine nonchalantly shrugged his shoulders.

“He’s Qin Wentian from the Emperor Star Academy.” The expression of one of Wang Chong’s companion froze. Naturally, the news of Qin Wentian killing Orfon had already been spread around the Royal Capital, so it wasn’t strange for the Royal Academy to know about it. It was only because Gretchen had only recently returned from her “close-door seclusion” that no one brought the matter up.

“He killed Orfon?” Gretchen sat up, looking towards her companions.

“Yes. In the Emperor Star Academy’s arena, right in front of everyone.” That person nodded his head, shooting a glance at Qin Wentian as he continued, “Not only that, both of the Astral Souls

he condensed came from the 3rd and the 4th Heavenly Layer, respectively. As a result, the punishment for his offense of killing Orfon was a mere one month imprisonment.”

“Scram! Also, please inform Murin that I still remember quite clearly the way he treated my Qin Clan, I will certainly look for him in the future.” Qin Wentian flung the Origin Sword on the ground. Gretchen pitifully picked herself up and walked away.

The fact that Qin Wentian entered the Emperor Star Academy and possessed such shocking talent was a huge bruise on her ego.

Qin Wentian chose not to kill Gretchen because he was very clear about his current situation. The situation with the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan had already reached an irreversible situation. Although he managed to enter the Emperor Star Academy, he was not free of worries. On the contrary, even more people wanted his death.

Regardless of whether it was help from the Emperor Star Academy, the Divine Weapon Pavilion, or Immortal Drunken Wine, all this was not his own strength. Only when his own strength was capable of subduing everyone would he have the qualifications to be arrogant. To be able to do as he wish with no repercussions.

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze onto Immortal Drunken Wine, only to see Immortal Drunken Wine smiling at him, “Shall we get drunk?”

“Let’s get drunk.” Qin Wentian smiled as he nodded his head.

“Where?”

“Anywhere, as long as you’re the one footing the bill.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed, to which Qin Wentian merely shrugged. After doing so, he glanced at Fatty and Sheena before asking. “What about the both of you?”

“Hehe.” Fatty blinked as he smiled, “How about this? Sheena, go choose a Divine Weapon and put it on the tab of my dear boss. As for myself, I will go drinking with my boss.”

“This.....” Sheena stuttered as she looked to Qin Wentian.

“Francis, accompany Sheena and put whatever she chooses on my tab.” Qin Wentian instructed Francis while glaring at Fatty. This damn fatty kept calling him his boss. He would definitely make Fatty pay the price one day.

“Sheena, there’s no need to stand on ceremony with my boss.” Fatty shamelessly continued. He had already seen how rich a weaponsmith would be. In the future, he would certainly make sure that he would obtain a few perks from Qin Wentian.

Francis led Sheena away, and the two of them departed. Fatty cast a glance at Immortal Drunken Wine and asked, “Ranked third among the Royal Capital’s ten prodigies. You should be very powerful, no?”

“Hmm, I guess I’m not too bad.” Immortal Drunken Wine

replied, feeling that Fatty was an interesting fellow.

“After drinking, we would all be brothers. Can we seek your help if we ever get into a fight with others?” Fatty’s eyes shone with a sneaky light, causing Qin Wentian to roll his eyes. This fellow actually planned so far ahead. As long as they could enlist Immortal Drunken Sword’s help when fighting, dealing with Orchon was going to be a piece of cake.

“As long as there’s wine, fighting is no problem for me. Just don’t make me foot the bill.” Immortal Drunken Wine burst out laughing, causing the light in fatty’s eyes to shine even brighter.

“Qin Wentian, when you forge a 2nd-level top-grade Divine Origin Sword, remember to give one to me.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed as he regarded Qin Wentian.

“No problem.” Qin Wentian straightforwardly agreed. Immortal Drunken Wine had a free and easy personality, and he didn’t mind directly asking Qin Wentian for a Divine Weapon. If he were asking someone else, this type of request would probably be regarded as taboo.

.....

In the Emperor Star Academy, home of the Knight’s Association.

Orchon, Murong Feng and the rest all gathered together. Orchon looked towards Murong Feng as he stated, “An incident occurred near the Divine Weapon Pavilion earlier this afternoon. Qin Wentian has already stepped into the 2nd level of Arterial

Circulation, and not only that, Mustang passed the earth-grade Thousand Hand Imprint innate technique over to him. He should have already mastered the first imprint.”

“Do you think that he is capable of threatening me merely with that technique?” Murong Feng glanced at Orchon.

“At the very least, we can’t be careless. Previously, we thought that he already died in the Dark Forest, but in the end, my brother was the one who died in his place. This time around, we must fully seize this opportunity. I will give you an earth-grade innate technique for you to cultivate. Work hard in comprehending the insights behind it. Also, do you want to raise your Emperor Star Jade Medallion to the 5th grade?”

Murong Feng’s pupils contracted. A 5th grade Jade Medallion. Without a doubt, this was extremely tempting for him. However, the vast amount of Yuan Meteor Stones needed to upgrade it made him unable to afford it.

“Naturally.” Murong Feng stated.

“During moments of heated combat in the arena, accidents will often occur. If Qin Wentian were to somehow be crippled as a result of the battle, I can guarantee that I will increase the level of your Jade Medallion to the 5th grade.” A cold light radiated from Orchon’s eyes. As long as they crippled Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian would lose the protection granted to him by the Emperor Star Academy. In that case, the only path remaining for him was death.

The Ye Clan and the Ou Clan would most certainly be willing to provide the 300 Yuan Meteor Stones required to upgrade the Jade Medallion.

Murong Feng's eyes narrowed. To him, this meant that they required him to take a risk. If he really crippled Qin Wentian, he didn't know what reactions the Emperor Star Academy would have.

“This is a fair battle. With us here, the Emperor Star Academy would not go to such lengths to seek revenge for the sake of a crippled person.” The coldness in Orchon's eyes intensified. As he heard those words, Murong Feng's eyes similarly flickered with a cold glint of light.

AGM 057 – Provocation

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were escorted back to the Emperor Star Academy by Immortal Drunken Wine and Francis. Holding a wine cask in his hand, a smile broke out on his visage as Immortal Drunken Wine examined the two of them walking with a swagger in their steps back to the academy, with a white puppy following closely behind them.

“Don’t lose the Yuan Meteor Stones that you just earned.” Francis reminded. Immortal Drunken Wine knew that the reason for Qin Wentian’s visit to the Divine Weapon Pavilion was for the Yuan Meteor Stones. And thus, after they finished their drinking session, he first escorted both of them to the Divine Weapon Pavilion, where Francis passed the proceeds over to Qin Wentian before he agreed to sent them back to the academy alongside Immortal Drunken Wine.

“Don’t worry, he’s not completely drunk.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed. These two fellows were truly interesting, especially that Fatty, Fan Le; after he got drunk, he kept calling out for beautiful girls.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were drunk indeed. They were only 16 years of age, how could they compete in drinking against the famous Immortal Drunken Wine.

Who was Immortal Drunken Wine? Since his nickname included these two words— Drunken Wine—how could he possibly get drunk so easily? So in the end, the ones that got drunk were none other than Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

“Brother, do you think that phony drunk immortal lost to us? Look at how obedient he is, even escorting us back.” Fan Le hugged Qin Wentian as he giggled.

“Screw off.” Qin Wentian, who was getting hugged, was extremely pissed as he raised his legs and aimed a kick at Fan Le, “Damn fatty, are you treating me like a pretty girl?”

“Brother, why are you so mean to me? This fatty love guys as well.” Fan Le grinned, causing goosebumps to appear on Qin Wentian’s entire body. The shock of that statement was so great that it even woke Qin Wentian up from his drunken state. He quickly maintained a distance away from fatty.

The nearby students who witnessed this all started laughing. There was a particular girl whose laughter was the loudest. In the Emperor Star Academy, weren’t these two the stuff of legends? Why were they in such a state, and that fatty.....actually said that he had a thing for guys?

“Laugh, laugh, pretty baby. Do you want me to show you what happiness is like?” Fatty started walking towards the girl while being enveloped by the strong smell of alcohol. The girl gave a shrill scream as she took off at top speed.

“Damn Fatty, you are going to be famous, haha.” Qin Wentian started laughing uproariously. His words somehow hit the nail on the head. Fatty was indeed ‘famous’ now.

The two of them stumbled and swaggered all the way to their dorms before finally sinking into blissful unconsciousness, sleeping all the way until the next morning. Upon waking up, Fatty's body involuntarily quivered. He stood beside Qin Wentian and asked, "What happened last night?"

"Nothing." Qin Wentian shook his head.

"Then why did I dream that I spouted some nonsense?" Fatty patted his head and stretched his body before walking outside. As he strode out, there was someone who noticed Fan Le walking out and called out with a grin, "Brother Fatty, you've awoken!"

Fatty's expression flickered. Why is he so popular today that people would take their own initiative to greet him?

"Brother Fatty, look at all the handsome males here. Which one do you like best?" Another person joked, causing Fatty's cheeks to redden. Could it be that the dream earlier was real?

"Screw off, this handsome fatty only loves women, beautiful women." Fatty raged, causing the other students to wink as they laugh loudly, "Don't worry, we understand."

Qin Wentian started walking towards the crowd. He decided to draw a clear line between him and Fatty.

"Boss," Fatty pitifully chased after Qin Wentian, causing Qin Wentian to walk forward even faster.

“Qin Wentian, Fan Le, there’s a public lecture today, and the teacher giving the lecture is a beautiful guest elder. Do you guys want to go together?” A random student asked.

“Beautiful elder?” Fatty’s eyes abruptly shone with a luster the moment he heard this. “Go, of course we are going.”

“Let’s all go together then.” The crowd laughed. They proceeded forwards, arriving at a spacious empty area. In this empty area, there were many mats made from bluestone as well as a tall platform. This place was known as the Lecture Hall.

Not every student would have the chance to enter the tutelage under an elder, and hence, the academy would usually arrange for guest elders to give lectures on a rotational basis.

Today, the Lecture Hall was flooded with many new students, causing today’s atmosphere to be permeated with a sense of vitality.

“Elder Rain is here.” At this moment, the students’ gazes were all riveted onto a figure. Rain was wearing a jade-green long dress without any other adornments. Clean, tidy, pure and elegant. Combined with her exquisite features, just looking at her gave people a sense of joy. She was truly a beautiful elder. Catcalls rang out as she approached the platform.

“Mature Goddess.” Sitting near the stone platform, Fatty almost had his eyes pop out of his sockets as they shone with a glimmering

light.

Rain sat down cross-leggedly on the platform, casting her gaze downwards at the students. A soft and clear voice rang out, “For most of you, your cultivation levels are at the 7th, 8th, 9th level of Body Refinement, or, at the early stages of Arterial Circulation. Today, I shall share my knowledge regarding cultivation at the Arterial Circulation Realm to all of you.”

“Right, we will listen to whatever teacher says.” The students below all hollered.

“All of you should know that the human body can be likened to a vessel that possesses unlimited potential. This vessel can expand unceasingly, with no limits in capacity. The first realm of the martial path is Body Refinement. Cultivators have to temper their bodies to achieve the perfect body before they truly begin to start cultivating. The Body Refinement Realm is the most basic of all the cultivation realms, followed by Arterial Circulation.”

“But is the perfect body as described by Body Refinement really perfect? As you grow stronger and embark further on the martial path, your body will undergo further improvement and refinement, and as such, there is no limit to ‘perfection’.”

“The Arterial Circulation Realm, is the purification of Body Refinement. After the circular arterial path is formed, the entirety of the inner body is connected by the circular arterial path. The circular arterial pathway has links to our head, four limbs, heart, bone structure, etc. During cultivation, the Astral Energy you absorb will flow through the circular arterial path, inundating our

entire body and granting us greater strength when we battle.”

“Heightening the senses—Our sight and hearing undergo vast improvements as well; usually during a battle, the Astral Energy will flow towards our limbs because most of the innate techniques we practice can only unleash their might through the four limbs. But what about those unusual Astral Souls, or cultivators who have already reached a terrifying level? Just their gaze alone would be sufficient to petrify their opponents, and the air that they breathe out would be enough to kill.”

“So don’t limit your imagination. Open up your minds to the possibilities of cultivation. Absorb and revolve more Astral Energy around your body, tempering and refining it. Clear your acupoints to expand the amount of Astral Energy that can be stored, and attempt to form your 2nd or 3rd circular arterial pathway. And of course, all of you should take the type of Astral Souls you condense into consideration when you are cultivating, choosing a cultivation art, and practicing an innate technique.....”

As the gentle voice of Elder Rain sounded out, the entire Lecture Hall was in silence. Everyone was paying close attention, as if her voice contained a magical power capable of pulling the crowd into her vast knowledge of cultivation.

Because Qin Wentian had been taught by Uncle Black, his knowledge regarding cultivation could be considered more in-depth than his peers. However, he was still entranced by the lecture. There was no cultivation path that was perfect, so it would always be beneficial to listen to others who stronger than himself, granting him even more perspectives and insights.

The lecture continued on for four more hours, and when Elder Rain was about to leave, there were several students who didn't wish for her to go. They wanted to continue listening to her analysis and explanation.

"I want to woo that goddess." Fatty glanced wistfully at Elder Rain's departing figure.

"You better wake up your delusion. One slap from Elder Rain is enough to kill you." Qin Wentian glared at Fatty, who revealed a depressed expression on his face. He grudgingly accepted that it was still better to focus on his cultivation.

"There are still ten more days. Are you guys prepared?" At this moment, the sound of a voice abruptly rang out. Qin Wentian and Fan Le shifted their gaze over, only to see Murong Feng and Du Hao standing there with hints of provocation in their eyes.

Upon resting their gazes on Murong Feng and Du Hao, the spectators displayed hints of excitement on their faces. All of them knew that in ten days, these four would engage in combat with extremely high stakes. This was a battle that filled others with anticipation!

"To deal with the likes of you two, do we still need preparation?" Fan Le grinned.

"Tough words." Du Hao coldly snorted.

Murong Feng stroke his chin as he said to Qin Wentian, “I heard that you cultivated an earth-grade innate technique. I hope you won’t disappoint me when the time comes. After all, there is no point of having a one-sided battle.”

Murong Feng and Du Hao turned their bodies and departed, but in that instant, as he turned to depart, a look of extreme chill flashed in Murong Feng’s eyes. He had already come to a decision to go along with Orchon’s despicable plan to cripple Qin Wentian.

“How arrogant.” Fan Le murmured as he stared at their departing silhouettes.

“Fatty, we must work hard; otherwise, when the time comes, we will only be throwing away our face.” Qin Wentian strode away. A faint smile could be detected on his face. This battle was one that they absolutely had to win. After all, this was just the beginning. The brutal torture that Fatty endured in the Dreamsky Forest was a horrifying event that Qin Wentian would always remember in his heart.

AGM 058 – The Eve Before The Battle

The Emperor Star Academy contained many places that allowed the students to cultivate, as well as arenas designated for sparring. Even so, the students preferred going to Dreamsky Forest as it was more exciting there, and they could go all out, unleashing their full strength without considerations.

Unlike his peers, however, Qin Wentian did not seek to enter the Dreamsky Forest. He instead chose to cultivate within his own dreamscape instead.

At this moment, inside a vast, spacious landscape, Qin Wentian standing alone, relentlessly cultivating his palm imprints.

“The Diamond Imprint draws an emphasize on hardness and ferocity; the way of the hegemon. Tyrannical beyond comparison, it’s capable of conquering every obstacle in it’s path. The Revolving Sea Imprint, on the other hand, forms a complete, harmonious cycle where hardness intermingled with softness, akin to the calm waters of a flowing creek and the raging torrents of a tsunami. It is a concept whereby the aspect of softness can be found integrated in hard attacks, and vice versa.”

Qin Wentian mumbled to himself as he sent out palm after palm, yet he was still unable to grasp the essence behind the Revolving Sea Imprint.

“It’s a pity that I have yet to break through to the Creation

Dream State. If this weren't the case, I could create an ocean within my dreamscape to aid in my comprehension of the Revolving Sea Imprint."

Qin Wentian immersed himself in experimentation within his dreamstate, sending out palms after palms while pondering about the Revolving Sea Imprint's essence. It was unknown exactly how many palm strikes he sent out, when suddenly, "Pa!" A sound rang out, causing Qin Wentian's eyes to glitter.

"Revolution! Cycle after cycle, it's the same concept as the Arterial Circulation Pathway. One start off the cycle with softness and revolves the energy until it reaches a pinnacle. The concentrated might then explodes forth in an instant, displaying extreme, overbearing power."

Qin Wentian's eyes sparkled as he drew in a deep breath, sending out even more palm strikes. This time around, the speed of his palm strikes were extremely slow, and yet they were still capable of producing wind. His palms even gave Qin Wentian the sensation that the palm imprints were in superposition, stacking themselves into many layers.

"Softness, this must be the concept of softness."

"Right, this is the sensation. The raging torrents of a tsunami superimpose with each other before reaching a crescendo as they erupt forth with the might of the combined waves."

The corners of Qin Wentian's mouth curled into a smile. Finally, he comprehended the insights of the Revolving Sea Imprints. Now, even without the aid of Astral Energy supporting him, each palm strike of was comparable to the overflowing torrents of ocean waves. Emitting a terrifying crashing sound, they were like the waves of a tsunami crashing against the shoreline.

After he practiced the Revolving Sea Imprint to the point of mastery, Qin Wentian, extend his consciousness within the dreamscape, attempting to connect with the tiny astral-being. These past few days, because he had an abundance of Yuan Meteor Stones at hand, Qin Wentian frequently attempted to peek into the memories of the tiny astral-being while in his dream state.

However, he gradually realised that it didn't require that much Astral Energy if he merely wanted his consciousness to enter the tiny astral-being. The tiny astral-being contained a space as vast as the galaxy. Within that inner space, there were countless memory fragments, floating about in that starry sky. Each and every memory fragment within that inner space had the ability to absorb Astral Energy and would require a colossal amount of Astral Energy before they could be activated.

This transformation caused Qin Wentian to be astounded. The tiny astral-being still possessed secrets that he's not aware of.

Naturally, Qin Wentian did not try to force his consciousness into the astral-being but instead, he followed the same method by which he originally awaken the astral-being. Outside the dreamstate, his real body used the Astral Energy in his body, the Astral Qi absorbed from the Heavenly Layers, and the Astral

Energy within his Yuan Meteor Stones to activate the tiny astral-being. However, the astral-being currently, was akin to a bottomless pit. It is simple if he wanted to extend his consciousness and enter the inner space, but if he wanted to activate the astral-being from the outside, he would need to exhaust an astronomical amount of Yuan Meteor Stones, causing Qin Wentian to be under tremendous pressure. His entire fortune may not even be enough to sustain the astral-being's absorption rate.

“Let's take a look at what memories this fragment contained.” In his dreamscape, Qin Wentian caused Astral Energy to flow into the boundless astral sea within the tiny astral-being's inner space. The Astral Energy was guided by the slightest intention of his will to a memory fragment in the boundless astral sea.

Naturally, the prerequisite was that in real life, Qin Wentian had to use the Astral Energy within his body or depend on Yuan Meteor Stones before he could direct the Astral Energy within his dreamscape. Cultivating inside his dream, Qin Wentian was unable to create reality from nothing. At least, not currently while his cultivation of the Dreamcast Art was still at the Shallow Dream State.

Gradually, the astral memory fragment began to glow with light, growing increasingly brighter as the Astral Energy flowed into it.

Finally, a ray of light flickered as a surge of memories entered Qin Wentian, resulting in his mind trembling from the influx of new memories before he was forcibly ejected from his dreamscape.

Shaking his head to re-orientate himself, Qin Wentian closed his eyes again, as he tried to make sense of the new memories embedded within his sea of consciousness.

His experience was similar to the recent memories he unlocked, just like when he saw the scene of the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect. What he saw now was an image-based memory, rather than a text-based one.

Cultivation arts, innate techniques etc, they were all text-based memories. Meanwhile, the grand battle that Qin Wentian witnessed previously in his memories, in the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect, was an image-based memory!

In the scene unfolding before him, he saw an empire. An extremely powerful and vast empire. In the empire, the Royal Palace radiated an aura of extremely domineering might and had a height that ascended to the heavens. Just this Royal Palace alone was bigger than the entirety of Sky Harmony City. Within the palace, experts were as common as the floating clouds.

In front of this empire's might, the Chu Country was merely an ant that could be squashed flat with a single finger. This was the sensation Qin Wentian felt when he looked at the empire's awe-inspiring sight.

Qin Wentian once again saw the figure of the middle-aged man from the previous memory he unlocked. Standing on the Sky-Reaching Pillar outside the Royal Palace, his proud smile seemed to disdain even the heavens. With a wave of his hands, he destroyed the heavens and earth, pushing the entire empire into turmoil. In

the scene, a world-shaking ravishing woman appeared, but she was directly knocked aside by the middle-aged man. For those who dared to block him, whether gods or devils, they were slayed immediately without the slightest bit of mercy.

This seemed to prove a saying that Qin Wentian once heard: when the power of a cultivator reached a certain level, just his strength alone could be considered equivalent to the power wielded by an entire empire.

In the boundless space of Heavens and Earth, I am free to do as I want. I am the Heavens. I am the Law.

When Qin Wentian exited from that memory, his feelings were turbulent, unable to calm down. So strong, too strong. Compared to that empire, the Great Chu could only be considered a small country. The middle-aged man could annihilate the whole of the Chu Country just by stamping his foot.

“No wonder Uncle Black told me that this is a cultivation-oriented world. Sky Harmony City was too small, and so is the Chu Country.” Qin Wentian deeply sucked in a huge breath, his heart palpitating wildly. But in his heart, he too understood. Although from a greater perspective, the Chu Country could not be considered anything, the current him could also not be considered anything within the Chu Country. If he wanted to become overwhelmingly strong, he had to proceed slowly and carefully, attaining strength step by step. He shouldn’t be too ambitious and bite off more than he could chew.

“Damn old fogey, who exactly were you? The tiny astral-being

that you left behind for me, what is it?”

Lifting his head as he gazed at the starry skies, Qin Wentian was once again reminded of that middle-aged man. Could the middle-aged man have been the damn old fogey?

If the middle-aged man is my dad, then did he really pass away?

“Hu.....” Qin Wentian spat out a mouthful of stale air as he silently stated in his heart. “If I activate the tiny astral-being again, what surprises will it give me?”

Qin Wentian was tempted to activate the astral-being once more. However, the day of the competition was approaching, making it more important to refine all the Astral Energy in his body into Divine Yuan Energy. This process would similarly required a vast amount of Yuan Meteor Stones.

“Although cultivation is hard, cultivating a tyrannical, peak-tier technique is harder. Not only must it depend on one’s talent, one would also need an astronomical amount of cultivation resources to support themselves.” Qin Wentian silently mumbled. He was contemplating whether he should he forge even more Divine Weapons to sell for more Yuan Meteor Stones within this period of time.

The Spirit Refinement Method involved the use of Divine Imprints to refine Astral Energy. The ‘Great Perfection’ state of the first level would be achieved when one could instantly refine and compact a huge amount of Astral Energy into a Divine Imprint

while cultivating according to the Spirit Refinement Method, thus converting it to Divine Energy. In the future, his comprehension regarding divine imprints would only grow stronger and stronger.

Time flowed by, and Qin Wentian focused all his attention on his refinement of Divine Energy. Moreover, after he formed Divine Energy in his body, he would flow the Divine Energy through his circular arterial pathway, sending the energy to temper every part of his body. After attending Elder Rain's lecture, Qin Wentian had gained some insights and knowledge that he could apply into his cultivation.

If this persisted for one or two cycles, there wouldn't be much change. However, Qin Wentian continued and persisted for a 100 cycles, eventually moving towards a 1,000 cycles, and gradually, he began to discover some changes in his body.

Not only was Qin Wentian relentlessly pursuing greater heights in his cultivation, Fan Le, was working hard as well. To him, this battle was of paramount importance. He would never forget the brutal baptism he tasted in the Dreamsky Forest. Even though Fatty didn't put his emotions into words, Qin Wentian understood the pain in his friend's heart.

Every time he thought of how Fan Le had suffered back in the dreamscape, the involuntarily trembling of his body after getting pierced through by spears, killing intent would surge wildly in Qin Wentian's heart. This debt could only be repaid by spilling fresh blood.

While Qin Wentian and Fan Le were busy cultivating, in the

Knight's Association, Murong Feng and Du Hao had not chosen remain idle either.

Ever since Qin Wentian killed Orfon and displayed his talent on the arena, Orchon knew that the person he had once despised, this ant-like existence, had already started to pose a threat to him. It wouldn't be that simple if he wanted to eradicate Qin Wentian. Now that there was such a good opportunity, how could he forsake it?

On the training grounds, Murong Feng and Du Hao took turns sparring against the other strong cultivators of the Knight's Association. Their attacks were all extremely ruthless and violent.

"There's no mistake about it. Murong Feng is a genius found only once in a century. The Spatialrend Fist is extremely violent in nature, capable of tearing apart meridians and energy channels, and just like the Thousand Hand Imprint, it is also an earth-grade, mid-tier innate technique. The only difference is that although it does not have numbered stances, the deeper one's comprehension is, the greater the destructive strength one would be able to unleash." Standing beside Orchon, a member of the Knight's Association coldly laughed.

Orchon's expression remained calm, but in the depths of his eyes, an extreme coldness could be seen. This Spatialrend Fist was an innate technique he had specially prepared for Qin Wentian, and both Murong Feng and Du Hao were cultivating it. The moves and stances from the Spatialrend Fist were all extremely vicious; its main purpose was to sever the energy channels and meridians of their opponents, thereby crippling their cultivation.

Murong Feng's cultivation level was much higher when compared to Qin Wentian's. Not only that, after mastering such a ruthless and vicious innate technique, the Spatialrend Fist, it was practically a guarantee that Murong Feng would completely suppress Qin Wentian.

“This is still not insufficient. To play it safe, I will prepare an additional trump card for Murong Feng. Qin Wentian, Fan Le, both you better be prepared to live out the rest of your lives as cripples.” Orchon started laughing manically. This victory was almost 100% assured.

TL Note: The Creation Dream State is the 2nd state of the Dreamcast Art. Previously it was known as Immersed Dream State.

AGM 059 – Attention-Attracting Battle

Today, the arena of the Emperor Star Academy was swamped with crowds of people. Amongst these people were two groups that were especially eye-catching. As they stood close to the arena, both of the groups stared daggers at each other, adopting aggressive postures.

They were none other than the Knight's Association and the Greencloud Association. They were gathered here because today was the predetermined day of their battle.

Murong Feng and Du Hao had both arrived. They'd already joined the Knight's Association, and had officially become part of their members.

"They're not here yet?" Murong Feng slowly walked up to the arena with both his hands clasped behind his back. Du Hao followed closely behind.

Although he was only 16, Murong Feng already possessed hints of a strong expert with his mannerisms. Standing atop the arena, he gave off the pressure of a large, unsurmountable mountain.

He was 16 years old, possessed two Astral Souls, and was at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation; Murong Feng was number one amongst the new batch of students in the Emperor Star Academy. His accomplishments were so numerous that they seemed to surround him with a radiant and resplendent halo.

“Murong Feng looks extremely confident in himself.” People in the crowd murmured.

“Qin Wentian is here.” At this moment, not far away, several figures were approaching their direction. The ones in the lead were none other than Qin Wentian and Fan Le, who directly walked towards the members of the Greencloud Association, coming to stand beside Luo Huan.

“Senior Sister.” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Are you confident?” Luo Huan arched her brows as she smiled, causing the heartbeats of those around her to race.

“I’ll try my best.” Qin Wentian laughed. Although he was modest with his words, in his heart, Qin Wentian held a certain degree of confidence.

“I’m looking forward to it. Do your best!” Luo Huan smiled. Qin Wentian and Fan Le both walked up the arena, as they cast their gazes forward onto the two silhouettes that were already atop the stage.

As he saw Qin Wentian and Fan Le approaching, Murong Feng indifferently asked, “Since this is a battle, there are bound to be injuries. What happens if I accidentally miscalculate my strength and injure both of you?”

Both Qin Wentian and Fan Le’s eyes narrowed. This Murong

Feng truly seemed confident in himself.

“You should worry about yourself,” Qin Wentian replied.

“What? What did you say? Did I hear it incorrectly?” Murong Feng burst out into laughter. “If you injure me, rest assured, I won’t allow the academy to find fault with you. If i’m injured by you, just treat it as if I was incompetent.”

“The same goes for me. If I’m defeated, I won’t even mind if you want me to die. But what about both of you?” With a gaze as sharp as swords, Du Hao cast his eyes on Qin Wentian and Fan Le, causing the hearts of the crowd to tremble. This...this meant that the Knight’s Association had come prepared. They wanted to sign a life-and-death contract with Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

Naturally, death was impossible, since the Emperor Star Academy would never allowed that to happen. However, if one misjudged their strength during a fierce battle, it was extremely possible for someone to end up seriously injured.

Qin Wentian glanced at Murong Feng and Du Hao. The intent behind their words, how could he not understand it?

“Both of you, are you sure?” Qin Wentian’s heart was as calm as still water as he gently asked.

“If you’re hoping that I can show mercy, perhaps I will consider it.” Hints of provocation flashed in Murong Feng’s eyes.

Qin Wentian locked gaze with Murong Feng for a moment before saying, “Since this is the case, let’s get started.”

In the past, Qin Wentian did not have any deep grudges against Murong Feng and Du Hao. But now, since both of them were prepared to seriously injure him, Qin Wentian, already understood what he had to do today.

“The decision to accept today’s battle will be the worst mistake you ever made in your entire life.” Contained within the calm voice of Murong Feng were hints of unwavering conviction and self-confidence. As the sound of his voice faded, he released both of his Astral Souls. Two faint shadows materialised on top of his forehead. One was that of a lion, while the other was that of a gigantic hawk. Beast-type Astral Souls were extremely violent, granting ferocious, explosive strength that immensely heightened one’s attack power. The Astral Souls that Murong Feng had chosen were both Demonic Beasts Astral Souls

Bestowing herculean strength was the characteristic of the Lion Astral Soul, while bestowing terrifying attack boosts and nimbleness were the characteristics of the Gigantic Hawk Astral Soul. The characteristic of both of these Astral Souls would integrate with Murong Feng’s body.

At this moment, Murong Feng’s eyes had also transformed into something bestial. The aura he exuded certainly did not belong to someone at the early stage of the 4th level of Arterial Circulation!

Du Hao similarly released both of his Astral Souls. One of his Astral Soul took on the shape of a typhoon, while the other was a sabre that glinted with a cold light. However, despite of the typhoon's fearsome appearance, the intensity of the windforce wasn't something too domineering. After all, the Typhoon Astral Soul was an Astral Soul that Du Hao had condensed from the 1st Heavenly Layer, while the sabre-type Astral Soul had been condensed from a constellation in the 2nd Heavenly Layer.

Fan Le's Bow and Arrow Astral Soul had also been released. In his hands, he held a bow condensed from Astral Light. Three Astral Arrows were already nocked and ready to fire at a moment's notice.

"How do you want to play?" Fan Le grinned as he looked to Qin Wentian.

"Can you handle Du Hao?" Qin Wentian asked.

"No pressure. Consider it done." The smile on Fan Le's face widened, causing Du Hao to snort coldly.

"Leave Murong Feng to me." A radiant smile appeared on Qin Wentian face as he released his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul.

"Merely the 2nd level of Arterial Circulation." Murong Feng shook his head while laughing. The next moment, his body flickered. The quiet Murong Feng had disappeared in an instant, replaced by a Murong Feng that released a brutal and vicious aura as he dashed forth with extreme speed, causing a raging wind to

stir in the arena.

Jumping upwards, Murong Feng was akin to a gigantic hawk soaring in the skies. With his talons extended, Murong Feng used the force of gravity to swoop towards Qin Wentian. Those incomparably sharp talons explosively descended towards Qin Wentian, emitting a terrifying and baleful aura that was similar to a high level demonic beast.

In response to this, Qin Wentian merely raised his arm, unleashing a draconic roar. The Subduing Dragon Fist metamorphosed into a raging azure dragon that lacerated everything.

At the same moment, Murong Feng's body swooped down with break-necking speed. His sharp talons transformed into fist lights, accompanied by roars of a lion, as Murong Feng's violent fists tore apart space. A huge pressure gushed forth, pressing down on Qin Wentian.

In that instant, Qin Wentian felt an impending sense of danger. Holding nothing back, he fully employed the might of the first stance of his Thousand Hand Imprint—the Diamond Imprint. A thunderous sound reverberated as he struck out, causing explosions of Astral Energy in the air. The fist light that originated from Murong Feng's technique, the Spatialrend Fist, continued to press down on with huge pressure, clashing against the Diamond palm imprints shot out by Qin Wentian. Upon impact, Qin Wentian felt that the energy channels and arteries of his arms were trembling unceasingly, as if they were about to shatter and break apart.

Qin Wentian was pushed back by the force's rebound. His feet emitted grinding sounds from the friction as he was forced backwards by the impact. Although the technique had already been executed, the terrifying surge of energies from the Spatialrend Fist lingered in his body, causing his energy channels to continue trembling.

“What a powerful innate technique! The grade of the Spatialrend Fist is not any lower when compared to the Thousand Hand Imprint.” Qin Wentian was silently shocked. He almost suffered a defeat by underestimating his opponent, who was stronger than him in cultivation by two levels and also had the support of a mid-tier, earth-grade innate technique. If Qin Wentian wanted to win this battle, he had to go all out.

“The Spatialrend Fist.” Below the arena, Luo Huan's expression grew unsightly. To think that Murong Feng had cultivated the Spatialrend Fist to such a stage where he could manifest fist lights. This battle was extremely dangerous, and involuntarily, she became worried for Qin Wentian. Despite the fact that Qin Wentian possessed an advantage because his Astral Souls originated from a higher layer, the differences in cultivation level would not be easily overcome.

On the other side, the battle between Du Hao and Fan Le had also erupted. A gigantic sabre formed from Astral Light was equipped in Du Hao's hand. That Astral Sabre was also tempered with the windforce effect from his Typhoon Astral Soul, causing the speed of his sabre strikes to be lightning fast and flexible. Not only was his attack speed fast, Du Hao's movement speed was nothing to sneeze at as well. He was an opponent who specialised in speed and

thus extremely tricky to deal with.

“The Greencloud Association, have you finished preparing the 200 Yuan Meteor Stones?” Orchon’s sharp swept in Luo Huan’s direction. It appeared that today, the Greencloud Association was going to suffer a huge loss.

Luo Huan coolly cast a glance at Orchon before shifting her gaze to Qin Wentian, murmuring in a low voice, “Junior Brother, it’s all up to you now. Shine as bright as you can, there are many people spectating this battle today.”

Although this battle could be seen as a battle between the Knight’s Association and the Greencloud Association, the lead actors in the battles were both extraordinary.

Qin Wentian, a 16 years old with Astral Souls from the 3rd and 4th Heavenly Layer. His future potential was immeasurable.

Murong Feng, once in a century genius. Also 16 years old, he had a cultivation base at the 4th level of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Not only that, Luo Huan also heard a rumor that would prove dangerous for Qin Wentian if the rumor was true.

Because of the participant’s monstrous talent, this battle attracted the attention of several important figures.

On the Arena.

“The Thousand Hand Imprint, is this all that it is capable of? If it is, this battle will be one that you will regret the most for the rest of your life.” Murong Feng slowly walked forwards, surging with a violent pressure. That surge of pressure, which seemed capable of shattering everything in its range, gushed forth towards Qin Wentian.

Seeing Murong Feng slowly stepping forwards, the Divine Yuan Energy that Qin Wentian refined started to flow throughout his body. His perfected Stellar Meridians transferred the Astral Energy in his body more smoothly when compared to any other cultivators. As long as Qin Wentian willed it, the innate strength he unleash would also be gathered and released more quickly when compared to the other students.

“Is that so?” Qin Wentian smiled. Using the Divine Energy he condensed and refined from the tyrannical Astral Qi of the Heavenly Hammer Constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer, he sent out even more palm imprints.

How powerful would his strikes actually be?

Qin Wentian had never tested his true might in a ‘real’ battle before.

“Boom!” The earth trembled as Murong Feng lunged madly towards Qin Wentian with a stance that was as strong as a ferocious beast and as quick as a hawk pouncing onto its prey. The devastating pressure he emitted slammed towards Qin Wentian’s

direction.

“Too late to regret now.” Murong Feng’s countenance remained incomparably calm. This battle, as he had expected, was a battle without suspense.

“Rumble!” Inside Qin Wentian body, the terrifying Divine Energy frenziedly gathered in his arms. Qin Wentian stood at his original spot, and slowly, so slowly, he extended his palms out, sending out the first palm imprint of the Thousand Hand Imprint—the Diamond Imprint.

This time around, the light released by the Diamond Imprint was even more resplendent than before. Contained within the ancient imprint was a surge of extremely monstrous pressure. It as if this palm strike was a divine palm strike from the celestial realms, capable of overwhelming everything, crumbling everything into nothingness.

Both of their attacks clashed explosively against each other, resulting in the eruption of a storm of ferocious gales that tore through the entire arena.

“Scram!” Qin Wentian spat out a ball of Divine Yuan Energy. This Divine Energy transformed into a gigantic palm that directly slammed against Murong Feng’s body, forcing Murong Feng to retreat several paces as he spat out blood. Qin Wentian remained standing in his original position, as steady as a mountain.

“Is that truly the Diamond Imprint? How can it possibly be this powerful?” Luo Huan’s countenance froze. She had naturally witnessed others using this innate technique before but in terms of the power behind the strikes, Qin Wentian was on a completely different scale.

“Not only that, how smooth must the speed of energy transfer in his meridians be before he could do materialize the ball of Astral Energy that he spat out? And how did it transform into a giant palm?”

Although Luo Huan’s heart was trembling, a radiant smile filled with soul-shaking charm appeared on her lips. She was liking her Junior Brother more and more with each passing moment.

AGM 060 – Fetters

The ball of energy that Qin Wentian spat out was able to transform into the shape of a gigantic palm because he had originally used a palm-type divine imprint to condense and refine the Astral Energy in his body into Divine Yuan. Consequently, every strand of Divine Energy contained palm energies.

As for the other reason, it was all thanks to Elder Rain's lecture earlier, which improved Qin Wentian's understanding of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Because his meridians had been reconstructed after he crippled them, he eventually succeeded in constructing the Stellar Meridians. Following the information gained from the lecture, Qin Wentian flowed the Astral Energy in his body, allowing the Astral Energy to flood every orifice, achieving a miraculous result. It was only the combination of these factors that allowed the scene from before to occur.

The hearts of the crowd trembled as they witnessed Murong Feng being forced to retreat. They had all thought that, being the two cultivation base levels higher Qin Wentian as well as having mastered the earth-grade innate technique, the Spatialrend Fist, Murong Feng would surely be able to dominate Qin Wentian.

“That palm imprint just now, how terrifying! I once saw a senior who was at the peak of the Arterial Circulation Realm unleashing that move. Although the power behind his strikes was stronger than Qin Wentian, the aura behind it was nowhere as ferocious.” An old student in the crowd murmured in a low voice.

“Indeed, it is extremely terrifying. Looks like this battle's victor

still has yet to be determined.” The spectators grew excited.

Murong Feng was forced backwards, as he regarded Qin Wentian seriously. His lips slowly curled into an unpleasant smile before he stated, “Good! Only then would there be meaning. Only then would it be interesting. Thanks for allowing me to unleash my full power, if not, this battle would have truly been too boring.”

“Murong Feng held back earlier?” The hearts of the spectators were startled. If this was the case, did that mean that Murong Feng still had a trump card?

“Do you know why I chose to condense beast-type Astral Souls?” Murong Feng glanced at Qin Wentian as he asked passively.

“Not interested.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Hehe, have fun and enjoy this. This is going to be the first time I fully unleash my strength ever since I joined the Emperor Star Academy.” Murong Feng calmly spoke. Abruptly, an extremely monstrous Qi emanated forth from his body. His whole body now emitted the pressure of an ancient primordial beast as the monstrous Qi continued surging.

“Bloodline Limit.” The hearts of the crowd trembled fiercely. The number one of the new students, Murong Feng, had actually possessed a Bloodline Limit? Didn’t this make his talent too terrifying!? If that were the case, the cultivation base advantage he held over Qin Wentian wasn’t worth mentioning. Even if they were at the same level, just solely based on his Bloodline Limit, he

would already have the qualifications to clash against Qin Wentian and win.

“No wonder he is so confident.” Many people exclaimed.

Upon seeing this scenario, a horrified look flickered in Luo Huan’s eyes. It appeared that the rumors were true. Murong Feng indeed possessed a Bloodline Limit. Since this was the case, Qin Wentian would surely be in danger.

Her heart palpitated wildly.

“My bloodline is the Desolate Beast Bloodline. You are the first who’s qualified to make me use my full power, and for that, you should be proud.” Murong Feng gazed at Qin Wentian as he spoke. His body had somehow expanded in size, and the violent presence he was emitting was saturated to the limit. It was as if he really were a desolate beast.

“Boom.” Murong Feng stepped out, causing the ground of the arena to tremble.

Qin Wentian’s countenance grew heavier as he stared at Murong Feng. By igniting his Desolate Beast Bloodline, Murong Feng’s power level increased yet another level, exceeded Qin Wentian’s expectations.

But, so what of it?

The monstrous Qi Murong Feng was emitting grew increasingly stronger. By the time he arrived in front of Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian felt that his opponent was not a human any longer but rather a genuine desolate beast.

Murong Feng unleashed the Spatialrend Fist. Shining brilliantly, the fist's light was accompanied by the roars of lions and the shrill cries of eagles. The power contained within dominated everything, seeking to overwhelm Qin Wentian and pressure him to death.

Remaining expressionless, Qin Wentian knew that the Divine Energy within his body had long since been activated. Currently, the Divine Energy in his body was akin to the tidal waves of a great flood, flowing through his meridians, readied to be unleashed at any moment. While Murong Feng's fist was descending towards his opponent's body, the spectators only saw that Qin Wentian's palms lightly wavered. In that instant, it was as if he had sent out countless palm strikes. Each and every of those palm strikes looked incomparably gentle and soft, and yet, they were accompanied by the terrifying sounds of huge tidal waves crashing onto the shoreline.

Soon after, it was as if the palm imprint emitted a thunderous snarl, covering the Heavens and the earth. Although manifesting the Revolving Sea Imprint exhausted an unknown amount of Divine Energy from Qin Wentian's body in an instant, its effects were intimidating. The palm imprint gave off the sensation that it was capable of completely devouring the Heavens and the earth.

“Rumble!” The terrifying energy leaking out was rolling about on the arena. Murong Feng could only feel that the power of the palm

imprints was growing stronger and stronger. Not only that, Qin Wentian had yet to finish his attacks. Dashing forwards, Qin Wentian explosively sent out countless Revolving Sea palm imprints that blasted away the lights from Murong Feng's Spatialrend Fist, and in the end, the Revolving Sea Imprint overwhelmed everything as it arrived in front of Murong Feng's body.

The incomparably immense pressure caused Murong Feng's countenance to undergo a drastic change. Howling in rage and anger, Murong Feng executed the Spatialrend Fist to its limits, trying to offset the might of the palm imprint. However, despite of his efforts, his body was still violently flung into the air, his face bloodlessly pale.

“Qin Wentian was this strong?” The eyes of the countless spectators widened as they observed the battle. Qin Wentian's combat ability, wasn't it too terrifying?

“That's the second Imprint of the Thousand Hand Imprint—the Revolving Sea Imprint. In Qin Wentian's hands, the manifested Revolving Sea Imprint behaves as though it has come to life; even the sounds of ocean waves crashing were so realistic. How impressive!”

“Bloodline Limit? I still don't understand what gave you the qualifications to be that arrogant.” Qin Wentian stared straight ahead into Murong Feng's eyes as a cold smile was displayed on his visage. He understood that it would be best for him to fight a swift battle, given that the rate of consumption was too immense when he used the Revolving Sea Imprint. Qin Wentian had no way to

fight a prolonged battle.

Murong Feng's features contorted, hatred flashing in his eyes. Because he had been aided extensively and had a major cultivation level advantage over Qin Wentian, a loss would shame him extensively.

“Beautifully done.” Beside, Fan Le, who had also ignited his Empyrean Bloodline Limit, grinned towards Qin Wentian. As he spoke, he fired off nine shots in rapid succession, causing Du Hao to grow increasingly frantic. After igniting his bloodline, the power behind Fan Le's shots was even more tyrannical. Not only that, his mental strength also grew stronger, allowing him the change the direction of the arrows he shot at any moment so that Du Hao had no choice but to focus entirely on defense.

“Seems like there's no more suspense. The victors will be Qin Wentian and Fan Le.” Many thought in their hearts. Fan Le and Qin Wentian's respective combat abilities had completely exceeded their expectations, especially Qin Wentian's. His incredibly terrifying Thousand Hand Imprint, when compared to Murong Feng's Spatialrend Fist, was on a totally different level.

“Enough of this, stop playing around.” Orchon coldly shouted. Qin Wentian's martial prowess far exceeded his expectations. Luckily, he had prepared a trump card beforehand.

As the sound of his voice faded, both Murong Feng and Du Hao nodded their heads. Suddenly, the intensity of the pressure

gushing forth from their bodies rose frenziedly, growing increasingly stronger.

“What happened? Both of their strength surged all of a sudden?” The spectators’ pupils narrowed as they witnessed Murong Feng and Du Hao madly sprinting forwards, rushing towards their opponents.

Seeing this, Qin Wentian’s countenance froze. He executed the Revolving Sea Imprint once more. However, Qin Wentian felt a tremendous force pushing against him, a strength so vast that it seemed as though it was capable of toppling the Heavens. His body trembled violently as he was flung into the air before he slammed brutally onto the ground. Gasping, blood seeped out of the corners of his mouth. This sudden change in situation caught him unaware. What just happened?

The situation was reversed in an instant.

“Boom.” Murong Feng’s body moved with the speed of lightning, once more unleashing the Spatialrend Fist against Qin Wentian. Murong Feng’s fist light tore the space apart, its owner wanting to shatter Qin Wentian into dust.

“Hold your hand.” Luo Huan shouted, her expression undergoing a drastic change. No one could have imagined how intense today’s battle would be.

Qin Wentian went pale as he leaped up into the air. However, it was too late since the fist lights had already arrived.

“Break!” A voice howled in anger, causing Qin Wentian to turn his head around, only to see Fatty madly dashing over. Fatty pierced at the fist lights directly with the Astral Arrows in his hand. A crumbling sound rang out as the Astral Arrows were shattered into nothingness. The next moment, the incomparably tyrannical Spatialrend Fist slammed into his chest, causing Fan Le’s body to remain motionless before helplessly slumping onto the ground, completely devoid of strength. Qin Wentian swiftly rushed forwards and supported Fatty in his hands.

“The two of you, used forbidden medicine!”

The bodies of those from the Greencloud Association flickered as they appeared on the stage. Similarly, the killing intent released from those from the Knight’s Association was not weak either as they, too, appeared on the stage, locking their gazes together with those from the Greencloud Association.

“This is their true, original strength.” Orchon coldly exclaimed.

“This battle has already lost its meaning.” Luo Huan had a chilly look upon her face. Qin Wentian and Fan Le combat abilities had far exceeded all of their expectations. The two of them were only at the 2nd level of Arterial Circulation, but to think that they could contend against one at the 3rd level and another on the 4th level. Moreover, Murong Feng had ignited his Bloodline Limit, but he was still forced back by Qin Wentian. Despite this, no one could have anticipated that the strength of Murong Feng and Du Hao would undergo a sudden surge near the end of the battle.

“The battle has not yet concluded, no one can interfere.” Orchon laughed as a cold light flickered in his eyes.

“Fatty.” At this moment, Qin Wentian inspected Fatty’s body with reddened eyes. This was already the second time that Fatty took a blow for him.

“Oh mother, it really hurts. Brother, both of these two bastards used trickery. With my current state, I can’t help you any longer. Let’s admit defeat.” Fan Le forced a grin onto his face.

Qin Wentian retrieved several silver needles from his robe and inserted them into various acupoints on Fan Le’s body, stabilizing his injuries.

“The battle has yet to be concluded.” Murong Feng leisurely walked over. Qin Wentian inclined his head, only to see unpleasant smiles plastered all over the faces of Murong Feng and Du Hao. Their goal today was to precisely cripple both Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

Qin Wentian retrieved another silver needle, which he inserted into his Taiyang Acupoints while staring at Murong Feng. The killing intent surged flickered frenziedly in his eyes as he inserted needle after needle into various acupoints on his body. Surges of spiritual qi flowed into his meridians, following the insertion of the silver needles.

“The 12 Connecting Styles of Life Needles Art, capable of saving a life and extinguishing it. Before stepping into Yuanfu Realm, one

must not use this technique rashly.” Qin Wentian remembered the warning Uncle Black gave to him back at the Qin Residence. But the current Qin Wentian, he could no longer care about the consequences.

In Qin Wentian’s body, his blood started to boil as countless formless, invisible fetters locked onto his blood vessels.

Soon after, the Qi from the connecting needle techniques frenziedly circulated, transforming into a terrifying Qi spiral that shattered the formless fetters.

“Fatty, I promise you that there won’t be another time that you’ll have to suffer for me.” Forcing out a reassuring smile, Qin Wentian gazed at Fatty, who was cradled in his arms. The next moment, he raised his head and gazed towards the approaching Murong Feng and Du Hao, his heart filled with murderous urges.

“KILL!” While Qin Wentian roared in rage, the sounds of tearing echoed out. The clothes on his body were all torn apart of their own accord as the blood in his body seethed and surged. At this moment, Qin Wentian felt a boundless strength infusing his body. This feeling was somewhat similar to the time when Fan Le had used a blood imprint to transfuse the power of his Empyrean Flames Bloodline to him, only this time around, the feeling was stronger, much stronger.

The 12 Connecting Styles of Life Needles Art, was it just a mere needle technique?

TL Note: “Taiyang Acupoints”, Taiyang = Sun. The sun acupuncture point is located at our temples.

AGM 061 – Kill Me If You Dare

A boundless amount of wild and unbridled bloodlust gushed forth from Qin Wentian's body. The hearts of the crowd trembled with fear as they gazed upon Qin Wentian's naked upper body, where the pathways of his blood vessels were clearly visible. Traces of the complicated fetters could be seen binding and locking — coiling — around his blood vessels.

“What the hell is that?” Many stared in shock and awe. Mustang, who'd already set foot in the arena, was similarly shocked as well. Seeing the danger Qin Wentian had been in earlier, Mustang had decided to reveal himself so that he could stop Murong Feng if it became necessary. Not only Mustang, several other Elders had also revealed themselves, but no one had noticed. Everyone's attention was focused on Qin Wentian's body.

Qin Wentian gently placed Fan Le down on the ground as he glared hatefully at Murong Feng.

Looking at Qin Wentian's bloodshot eyes, Murong Felt actually felt traces of fear. Even his Bloodline Limit was trembling slightly — as if it could sense something that greatly surpassed its strength.

“Boom.” Qin Wentian stepped forth, filled with boundless killing intent, as he dashed straight towards Murong Feng and Du Hao.

The countenance of Murong Feng and Du Hao sank as they too, sprinted in Qin Wentian's direction. Given that things had developed to such a point, they couldn't afford to lose now.

“KILL!” Qin Wentian roared again as he released the Revolving Imprint. It glowed with a blood-red light as it emitted a towering sense of bloodlust, flying straight towards Murong Feng and Du Hao. The attacks they mounted in retaliation were easily devoured by the Revolving Sea Imprint, and the impact the two sustained caused their bodies to be hurled through the air. Murong Feng and Du Hao both spat out fresh blood as their internal Qi and blood roiled about their bodies chaotically.

Qin Wentian sprinted madly in their direction, causing the countenance of Murong Feng and Du Hao to turn pale white from fear. Turning their bodies, they hurriedly picked themselves up as they tried to rush down the arena. However, in but an instant, Qin Wentian had caught up. With a strike of his palm, he slammed his palm onto Du Hao’s back, the impact causing Du Hao to be blasted through the air, before he heavily landing on the ground below the arena — it was unknown if he was dead or unconscious.

“How domineering.” The expressions of the spectators went slacked-jaw. The ending of the battle was beyond the anticipation of everyone.

Qin Wentian didn’t halt his steps yet, as he continued to chase after Murong Feng. Feeling the cold burst of bloodlust behind him, fear and stark terror were written on the face of Murong Feng. He, the number one ranked figure among the new batch of students, was going to get killed by a madman here?

The Revolving Sea Imprint was sent out again with Qin Wentian somehow consolidating all his anger into that palm strike of his,

and the ensuing attack seemed to want to blast Murong Feng's body into pieces.

“Stay your hand.” However at this moment, a voice rang out from empty space, as a silhouette descended from the skies, splitting apart the gigantic palm imprint. The Revolving Sea Imprint instantaneously dissipated, as the surplus energy from the counter-attack gushed towards Qin Wentian, knocking him heavily down on the arena.

Qin Wentian picked himself up from the ground as he wiped away the traces of blood that had seeped out from the corners of his mouth. His killing intent and bloodlust surged to the max as he regarded the figure in front of him.

Janus!

“You despicable bastard, to think that you would be so ruthless, wanting to kill your fellow students.” Janus hollered in rage, as his gaze became as sharp as needles, condemning Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian stared at him, his killing intent still surging as he icily stated, “When they wanted to kill me earlier, why didn't you appear?”

“Your student, Orchon, said that before the battle was concluded, no one was to interfere. But now, to think that an esteemed elder such as yourself actually ran up.” Qin Wentian's icy voice was cold to the extreme, not giving Janus any face. Mustang, who was standing behind Janus, had yet to recover from his shock. The gaze

he used to regard Qin Wentian, was filled with an unknown trepidation.

“Janus, as an elder, you actually struck out against my student. Do you have any shame at all?” Mustang strode forwards and stood beside Qin Wentian as he stared at Janus.

“Elder Thousand-Hands, it should be time for you to make an appearance.” Janus stated, as a figure descended down from the skies. The figure was none other than Elder Thousand-Hands.

Luo Huan stepped forth, her gaze on Thousand-Hands, as she asked, “Elder Thousand-Hands, I wish to ask, in a fair competition, but yet using forbidden medicine to forcibly increase one’s combat power, and using vicious techniques, seeking to maim, and disable their fellow students, what might the punishments be?”

Thousand-Hands bitterly smiled, feeling depressed in his heart. He had spectated this battle all the way from the start till the end. Truthfully speaking, he was in awe of both Qin Wentian and Murong Feng’s talent. Both of them were absolute elites amongst the younger generation, especially Qin Wentian. His talent had even overwhelmed Murong Feng in the end. However if anything untoward happened to Murong Feng, it would be considered a loss to the Emperor Star Academy as well. Once again, he was put into a situation similar to the past, where it was extremely tough for him to make a decision.

“Elder Thousand-Hands, this battle is already concluded. And it wasn’t stated before the battle that it was illegal to use methods such as forbidden medicine. Since Murong Feng was defeated, the

Knight's Association will naturally honor the bet. But to think that Qin Wentian was so vicious, going as far as to wanting to kill Murong Feng, shouldn't he be punished for it?"

Janus looked to Thousand-Hands, as he inquired with a cold expression on his face

"When they were winning earlier, they forbid all interference. When they suddenly are on the losing side however, an elder like you stepped out immediately. How laughable. If I stopped pursuing him, how could I ever answer to my brother?" Qin Wentian stepped forth, to continue in pursuit of Murong Feng. The countenance of Janus sank as his body flickered, appearing in front of Qin Wentian, blocking his path. "You have no idea what's good for you — ignoring your elders, you're simply a thing that's lacking any manners and discipline."

"Old Bastard." Qin Wentian continued striding forwards as he locked gazes with Janus. Upon hearing the name Qin Wentian called him, the air that Janus emitted became colder and colder.

"Today, I have no choice but to do this." Mustang exclaimed, lunging towards Janus.

"Leave him to me."

"Mustang, how dare you." Janus icily glared at Mustang as his expression froze. Mustang actually wanted to make a move against him.

A battle between elders, how rare was that. But the fact was, today, it had occurred and was witnessed by the academy students.

“Return to the Knight’s Association.”

Orchon shouted to Murong Feng, as he led the members of the Knight’s Association away, departing from this place.

Qin Wentian glanced at Luo Huan, as he asked, “Senior Sister, can you help me?”

Traces of a faint smile could be seen in the eyes of Luo Huan as she replied, “Today, the battle between the Greencloud Association and the Knight’s Association has yet to be concluded. Since the Knight’s Association interfered halfway, there’s no way we would merely sit by the fence passively, doing nothing in return.”

As she spoke, the members of the Greencloud Association, started to madly sprint after the Knight’s Association.

Qin Wentian slowly walked forwards, causing the heartbeats of the spectators to surge with every step he took.

“Chaos, everything is in chaos now.” Thousand-Hands, upon witnessing the scenario, could only let out a bitter laugh as he chased after them.

The members of the Knight’s Association retreated to a standalone courtyard, only to see members of the Greencloud

Association frenziedly chasing after them, causing their expressions to turn extremely unsightly.

“They’re going too far, let’s fight them.” A cold light flashed in Orchon’s eyes, and an instant after the command, countless Astral Souls were released one after another, allowing for a great battle to erupt amongst members of the two associations. Qin Wentian’s gaze directly landed onto Murong Feng as killing intent radiated violently out from him.

“Boom.” The body of Qin Wentian exploded forth with great speed.

“Clear the path for him.” Luo Huan instructed as Yu Fei and Mountain both released their Astral Souls, running alongside Qin Wentian. Both of them naturally were members of the Greencloud Association.

The speed of the trio was extremely swift. As the attacks from members of the Knight’s Association came from the side, Yu Fei and Mountain responded instantly with attacks of their own. Their counter-attacks was so brutal and powerful that soon after, there was no one left who wanted to block their paths

Murong Feng’s countenance grew unsightly upon seeing this, as he once again turned his back and fled. The entirety of the Astral Energy in Qin Wentian’s body flowed to his legs via the Stellar Meridians. Every step of his was filled with tyrannical force, his speed even quicker than compared to Murong Feng.

In just a few seconds, Qin Wentian caught up, and with a roar of rage, he unleashed his Dragon Subduing Fists as he blasted Murong Feng away, knocking him facedown to the ground.

Murong Feng flipped his body over, intending to escape, only to see the foot of Qin Wentian trampling down on his chest, the force so great that it made him spit out blood.

“STOP.” Janus shouted, soaring in the air and landing in front of Qin Wentian. Glaring hatefully at Qin Wentian, he coldly stated. “This, is the 2nd time you’ve wanted to kill your fellow student. And not only that, your target this time round is the number one ranked amongst the new batch of students.”

As he was speaking, Janus took a step forth, releasing a terrifying pressure that gushed towards Qin Wentian.

“Touch him if you dare.” Mustang appeared, standing behind Qin Wentian.

Far off in the distance, the spectators unceasingly sprinted over as their hearts shook. This, was the 2nd time. Not only that, the scenario occurring was exactly like the time when Orfon had been killed.

“The one ranked first among the new batch of students? Now, he’s no longer that.” Qin Wentian stared at Janus as he spoke. “Earlier, Murong Feng and Du Hao’s aura suddenly surged dramatically. Don’t tell me that they didn’t use forbidden medicine. Not only that, they actually wanted to cripple me and

Fan Le using such cheap tricks, and the Knight's Association expressly forbade people from interfering. You yourself, and the disciplinary elder, didn't refute their decisions back then. So what right do you have to stop me now?"

"I will not let you kill Murong Feng." Janus took another step forwards. This time round, Qin Wentian's target, Murong Feng, was a elite many times more outstanding than compared to Orfon.

"That, will be exactly what I shall do today." Qin Wentian calmly stated, as he turned his gaze onto Orchon and the rest. "The first time, was plotting to ambush me in the Dark Forest; the second time, was forcing us to enter Mirage City; earlier on top of this arena, was the third time where you all tried to destroy me. Since you guys aren't fearful at all, why in the world would I be?"

The killing intent of Qin Wentian soared unbridled as it intensified, as he gazed down at Murong Feng under his foot.

"Those that touch my brother — regardless of who it is — I'll slay no matter the consequences." Qin Wentian coldly exclaimed, sending out a Revolving Sea Imprint, which manifested into a giant palm, slamming down onto the Murong Feng's head.

The result, was obvious for all to see.

The once number one ranked amongst the new students, was slain by Qin Wentian, right in front of Janus.

“YOU’RE COURTING DEATH.” Janus roared.

Qin Wentian, indifferently glanced at him, with neither fear nor terror, as he stated, “Since today I can kill him, similarly, I can kill you in just a few years. If you have the guts, either you kill me right now, or f*ck off and stop bothering me.”

After which, Qin Wentian turned and left, leaving behind the greatly startled Janus.

“Since today I can kill him, similarly, I can kill you in just a few years. If you have the guts, either you kill me right now, or f*ck off and stop bothering me.”

The body of Janus, was involuntarily shaking due to anger. But perhaps, hidden in that anger, were traces of trepidation. The eyes of the youth earlier when he said those words, were so cold, and were filled with determination.

Author’s note: In the morning, Qin Wentian unleashed a draconian roar so loud that it trembled the heavens. Upvotes, adding to bookshelf, monthly votes, commendations, hand it all over now!

TL note: In the morning, Qin Wentian unleashed a draconian roar so loud that it trembled the heavens. Donations, upvotes on reddit and NU, good reviews, more comments, hand it all over now! :p

AGM 062 – Ren Qianxing

Qin Wentian indifferently left after he tore apart the ranks of members from the Knight's Association and killed the previous ranked number one, Murong Feng.

The members of Greencloud Association also dispersed as Luo Huan spoke to Orchon, "The conclusion of the battle, I believe you don't need me to point it out anymore. Where's the 200 Yuan Meteor Stones that the Knight's Association wagered?"

"What wager?" Orchon coldly exclaimed, "Qin Wentian killed his fellow student, and yet you still expect to be paid? Just wait for the Disciplinary Committee's response."

"Hmm, I clearly remember that before the fight, Murong Feng and Du Hao clearly stated that if they died, it only meant that they were incompetent and that there wouldn't be a need for the academy to take action. These words were clearly heard by all the Elders of the academy who were there earlier. I believe that even you yourself was there as well." Luo Huan laughed as she continued, "But of course, if the Knight's Association wishes to deny it, our Greencloud Association will have nothing to say except that the lesson that was taught to your association was suitably satisfying."

After saying this, Luo Huan left with the remaining Greencloud Association's members. Despite of the victory, Luo Huan could not help but feel a trace of worry in her heart. That little fellow actually dared to so brazenly kill a peak-level genius like Murong

Feng. She had no idea what sort of response the Academy was going to have.

Qin Wentian didn't burdened himself with thoughts about what could be or could've been. After all, he was just a 16 year-old youth, and when he saw that Fatty got injured for trying to save him, he already lost all rationale and only wanted the death of Murong Feng. He obviously succeeded.

After that, Qin Wentian handed Fan Le to Mustang. Murong Feng's blow possessed an extremely ferocious might. Even though Fan Le blocked part of it, he had still been grievously injured

Qin Wentian also left with Mustang, following Mustang to his residence. At this moment, Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly in the training courtyard, deep in mediation. The terrifying remnants of energy was circulating around his entire body, seeking to devour his inner organs. This caused the exterior of his body to be swollen red, as though he was bathed in a strong sheen of bloody radiance. The remnants of energy were too tyrannical in nature. Currently, his body had no way to continue withstanding that excessive energy.

“Before stepping into Yuanfu, one must not rashly use this needle technique.” Qin Wentian recalled Uncle Black's instructions as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood before fainting into the merciful arms of unconsciousness.

Although Qin Wentian had fainted, the percussive winds of this incident were not yet settled. The matter was still under intense discussion, and Elder Thousand-Hands was under great

pressure. He had no choice but to seek Mustang out, wanting to take Qin Wentian away.

Two days later, after Qin Wentian woke up from his coma, his entire body was in so much pain, as though it was going to disintegrate into dust at any given moment.

Forcibly sitting up, he saw Mustang standing there with his back facing Qin Wentian.

“Teacher.” Qin Wentian called out. Mustang turned his head as his visage broke out into a smile. “You’ve finally awakened. You worrisome fellow, don’t use such an unstable technique anymore in the future. Your body is unable to withstand the immense influx of energy, and if it weren’t for the timely assistance of precious medicinal pills suppressing the excess energy, your body would probably implode.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head, “Thank you for saving me, Teacher. How are Fan Le’s injuries? Is he okay?”

“He is fine, nothing too major when compared to your injuries.” Mustang shook his head, “This fellow...you should be worrying for yourself instead. Janus and his group started putting pressure on the academy, and there are several who wanted you to be punished.”

Upon hearing that Fatty was fine, traces of a smile broke out on his face as the lines of worry smoothed over. Regarding the issue of the discipline handed to him by the academy, he didn’t even regard

it as something important.

Looking at the smile on Qin Wentian's face, Mustang couldn't help but to roll his eyes, "Can't you be more worried about this?"

"Worrying isn't going to be of any use. Since the deed is already done, I will admit it and face any consequences or repercussions that come my way." Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders.

"Beautifully spoken! I hope you won't shrink back from what you said." At this moment, a cold sounding voice drifted over as several figures walked in.

Qin Wentian contemplated his surroundings. He was in the disciplinary court of the Disciplinary Committee.

Very swiftly, Qin Wentian quickly analysed the situation. The people currently in this court could be categorised into three groups of people. Janus and his group, Mustang and a few other elders, and Elder Thousand-Hands and two others from the Disciplinary Committee.

Naturally, this was all orchestrated by Janus and his group, which had been applying pressure on the academy.

"Killing his fellow students twice! Not only that, this time around, Murong Feng was a peak-level genius, while Du Hao was grievously injured. Qin Wentian's nature is incorrigible and ruthless. Either we cripple him or we expel him from the academy.

Leaving him here would only endanger the other students.” Janus stated coldly, pushing Qin Wentian to the edge of a precipice.

“For the first incident, investigations have already shown clearly that it was Orfon who wanted to harm both of them in the Dark Forest. The battle between them was ruled to be a private battle, and Qin Wentian has already been cleared of all charges by the academy. For the second incident, Murong Feng and Du Hao consumed forbidden medicine to forcibly heighten their combat abilities. If they did that merely for the sake of victory, we can forget about it. But from the injuries that Fan Le sustained? It’s obvious that both of them wanted to use this chance to either kill or maim their fellow students. Tell me now, using your intelligent mind, was Qin Wentian wrong in what he did?”

Mustang glared at Janus with a chill in his eyes, refuting his claims.

“What about the fact that he showed disrespect to his Elders and even verbally threatened them? Such a unruly student, why are we even teaching him?” Janus retorted just as coldly.

“You, teach me?” Qin Wentian laughed as he looked to Janus, causing Janus’s facial expression to stiffen.

“Am I very familiar with you?” Qin Wentian continued, “You blatantly closed one eye and allowed your students to attempt to kill me. Not only that, you tried several ways to get the academy to punish me. But now, you still want me to respect you? You old bastard, such a thick skin. Don’t you know that respect is earned and not given freely?”

It was just as Qin Wentian had said. Since Janus wanted to deal with him, why should he still be polite with Janus?

“Elder Thousand-Hands, did you hear what he just said?” Janus coldly snorted.

Elder Thousand-Hands and the two other Elders studied Qin Wentian. One of the elders standing beside Qin Wentian asked. “If you are stronger than Janus, and if he blocked you when you intended to kill Murong Feng, would you kill him?”

“I would.” Qin Wentian replied with no hesitation, causing Janus’s countenance to turn extremely unsightly.

“Why?” That person further questioned.

“Murong Feng heavily injured my brother. Whoever chooses to block me for Murong Feng’s sake is my enemy.” An expression of resolute determination could be seen on his face.

That Elder nodded his head before he turned his gaze to Elder Thousand-Hands.

Thousand-Hands swept his gaze across everyone as he exclaimed. “All of you are no longer needed here. This is a matter for my Disciplinary Committee now.”

“What will the decision of the Disciplinary Committee be?” Janus inquired.

“That is none of your business. You can leave now.” Elder Thousand-Hands indifferently exclaimed causing Janus to furrow his brows. From the tone of Elder Thousand-Hands, Janus felt that it was highly possible that they wouldn’t do anything too drastic to Qin Wentian.

“I hope the Disciplinary Committee can give us a satisfactory reply.” Janus frowned, as he departed, full of unwillingness.

Mustang patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders as he, too, left the area. Like Janus, he believed that the Disciplinary Committee would not drastic to a genius of Qin Wentian’s caliber. At the very least, it was impossible for the Emperor Star Academy to expel him.

After everyone had departed, Elder Thousand-Hands instructed Qin Wentian, “Follow me.”

After saying this, he leisurely walked outside of the courtyard. Qin Wentian obediently followed without asking many questions.

After they walked out of the courtyard, Qin Wentian could see that the disciplinary hall was situated in front of a mountain. Thousand-Hands led the way, moving up the mountains and finally arrived at another courtyard. This courtyard was situated at the peak of the mountain and was built on the edge of the precipice. One could see the entire Emperor Star Academy from

this vantage point.

At this moment, at that vantage point, a figure with both hands clasped around his back was gazing downwards at the entire Emperor Star Academy.

“Qin Wentian is here.” Thousand-Hands respectfully said to the figure as hints of reverence could be seen from his eyes.

“Little friend, come over here.” That figure remained with his back facing Qin Wentian as he calmly instructed.

Qin Wentian gazed questioningly at Thousand-Hands, only to see Thousand-Hands smiling as he replied, “Little brother, your luck is not bad at all.”

After that, Thousand-Hands turned and departed. His mission had already been accomplished.

Qin Wentian walked towards the edge of the precipice, coming to stand beside the figure. The figure turned his body as he looked towards to Qin Wentian.

This figure was that of a middle-aged man. However, he looked much older than that. Streaks of white layered his brows, and his eyes were filled with a depth so deep that it seemed endless. It was as though he had experienced and weathered the world’s countless pain and sadness.

At this moment, that pair of soulful and amicable eyes became filled with traces of laughter.

“I like those who don’t follow the rules. Your personality is very similar to mine.” That person laughed as he continued. “My name is Ren Qianxing. You may not have heard my name before, but you surely would have heard of my story. After all, many years ago, I once committed the same act that you just did.”

“What was it?” Bewilderment shone on Qin Wentian’s face.

“The killing of a fellow student.” Ren Qianxing laughed, “This happened many years ago. I still remember that when I was much younger, in the Dreamsky Forest, I met an extremely lecherous fiend who did unspeakable things to a female student. After the female student exited the Dreamsky Forest, she was in such a hysterical state of extreme depression and was suffering from a nervous breakdown. Under a fit of rage, I killed the person who had tormented her.”

Qin Wentian froze, as a hint of anger flickered in his eyes. He would have done the same as well.

“If that’s the case, Elder should be one of the three that killed a fellow student in the Emperor Star Academy’s history. But the academy had no reason to punish you after they learned the reason behind your actions?” Qin Wentian continued asking.

Ren Qianxing shook his head, “I’m unlike you, my talent could only be considered average. The person I killed had a higher degree

of talent when compared to me. In this world, what people look at is not fairness and justice. This holds true in any circumstances. Not only that, the academy had made it clear that students are allowed to do anything they want in the Dreamsky Forest. That was why even killing was so common inside the dreamscape.”

TL note: 任千行(Ren Qianxing) ren = do as you will/mission. Qian=thousand. Xing =travel/journey.

AGM 063 – Favor

Qin Wentian, agreed as he nodded his head. In this cultivation-oriented world, there was no sense of justice or fairness. Back then, when he killed Orfon, he would certainly have been prosecuted by the academy were it not for his outstanding talent.

“Although the world runs this way, humans have to firmly hold onto their own beliefs. Even if they defy the rules, I admire those with personality and a conscience. However, there are also some that broke the rules solely to advance their own selfish greed, betraying all for the sake of benefits. Such cultivators, if the Emperor Star Academy allowed them to grow and continue nurturing them, might destroy the academy one day if they were offered tremendous benefits. If that were the case, they would surely agree.”

Ren Qianxing laughed as he continued, “You, however, are different. Last year, when the Ye Clan wanted to annihilate the Qin Clan, you could have easily chosen the route of self-protection, thrown your lot in with the Star River Association, and sought revenge in the future after you become strong. On the contrary, you did not do so. You chose to live and die by the side of the Qin Clan. Even though that was a foolish choice, I’m not condemning you, because this is exactly what I like about you.”

The incident was known to everyone in Sky Harmony City. At that time, Mustang had been there as well. It wouldn’t be strange that Ren Qianxing knew about this. Hints of laughter could be seen on Qin Wentian’s face. “Seems like senior and Elder Mustang have the same way of thinking. Could senior be the principal of the Emperor Star Academy?”

“No.” Ren Qianxing shook his head, “I was the 2nd student, the one that was imprisoned for many years. Of course, that was merely a rumor, and you can’t believe all of it. I merely decided not to appear in front of the masses.”

“Seems like that are still many secrets in the Emperor Star Academy.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart.

“Senior, with the ruckus I created this time around, I’m afraid that I’ve caused much trouble for the academy.” Qin Wentian glanced at Ren Qianxing.

“You wish to know how the academy will handle the incident? That was your aim behind your earlier statement, right?” A knowing look flashed in Ren Qianxing’s eyes, causing Qin Wentian to laugh in embarrassed.

“This little bit of ruckus couldn’t even be considered trouble for the academy, but you have indeed brought trouble onto yourself.” Ren Qianxing continued indifferently, “The Emperor Star Academy already had a few thousand years of history, and the members in there, regardless of Elders or students, all had their own thoughts and ways of doing things. But it was precisely this that created a competitive atmosphere in the academy. Only this way could the academy be considered to be ‘complete’.”

“The Emperor Star Academy had never once bothered to care about the personalities of its students. It only focused on grooming and nurturing their cultivation. Regardless of whether you are a

saint or an evil murderer, the academy doesn't care about what you will become in the future. That's why the Emperor Star Academy still holds its current status. Even now, the academy is still ranked number one out of the four great academies. Hence, the matter between you and Orchon, the academy wouldn't interfere with it. Here in the academy, there is only a single stage. How high can you soar depends on your own abilities."

Ren Qianxing laughed, "And as for me asking for you to be brought over, I merely wanted to see what sort of man you are. The genius who caused the academy to turn topsy-turvy so soon after joining. Now, since we've already met, you can go back now."

"Hmm." Qin Wentian blinked his eyes, "That's all?"

"Haha, what else do you want?" Ren Qianxing smiled as he regarded Qin Wentian.

"I thought that there would be some surprises in store for me since I met a legend of the academy." Qin Wentian touched his chin while grinning.

"Haha." Ren Qianxing started laughing uproariously, "Fine, since you want surprises, I will give this to you."

Ren Qianxing brought out a tiny golden-colored sword that contained a terrifyingly sharp sword qi. It was about the size of a finger.

“This is a Goldem Sword, a 3rd-grade Divine Weapon. However, it can only be utilised once. As long as one activates the Divine Imprint inscribed within, the sword qi of the Goldem Sword will be activated. Not even a 5th level Yuanfu cultivator would be able to defend against that sword qi if he took the full brunt of the attack. The radius of attack, as well as the area of effect, is immense. Be careful when using this sword.”

An intense light flickered in the depths of Qin Wentian’s eyes. This was such a valuable item. Of course, he knew that for 3rd-grade Divine Weapons meant for long-term usage, the explosive power contained within could not be compared to this single-use Goldem sword. This could essentially be treated as a lifesaving treasure.

“In the academy, I wouldn’t give you special treatment or bestow favoritism. If you want resources, depend on yourself to fight for them. There are many terrifying innate techniques and cultivation arts stored in the Heavenly Star Pavilion. If you are capable, obtain them yourself. As for the matter of this Goldem sword, I’m giving it to you as a means to ensure your safety. After all, you created huge waves of commotion so soon after joining the academy, so there are bound to be many who want your death. This is for you to protect your life. Remember, do not rashly use it unless you’re in a life-or-death situation.”

“Thank you Senior Ren.” Qin Wentian felt gratitude in his heart. What he needed most was precisely this type of lifesaving treasures. After all, Ren Qianxing was right, he had made truckloads of enemies. Don’t even mention the Royal Clan or the Ye Clan. He would be hard pressed even if he wanted to deal with Orchon.

“You can go, don’t tell anyone that you’ve met me, including Mustang.” Ren Qianxing waved his hands indicating that Qin Wentian could return.

“Wentian shall humbly take my leave.” Qin Wentian respectfully bent his waist, bowing to Ren Qianxing, before turning around and departing. A sunshine-like radiant smile blossomed on his face. It was inconceivable to imagine that this was the same youth as the crazed, bloodlust filled youth that killed Murong Feng.

Looking at the departing back view of this youth, traces of a faint smile appeared on Ren Qianxing’s face. This youth was even more interesting than himself back when he was a youth.

“You just couldn’t sit still, could you?” At this moment, a figure was treading through the air, approaching Ren Qianxing.

“How was he? Are you planning to induct him as one of the members of that plan?” That figure laughingly inquired.

Ren Qianxing cast a glance at the figure as he stated, “Personality wise, there is nothing wrong with Qin Wentian. At least, presently, there are no problems.”

“Look at him, creating such waves of turmoil, turning the academy topsy-turvy so soon after he joined. Are you not worried that he would become another him?” That figure continued smiling.

“It was merely the hot bloodedness of youth, nothing too remarkable. I was the same when I was young. And just like what you said, I’m still considering, I shall continue my observations first.” Ren Qianxing shook his head as he smiled bitterly. In the past, he had highly regarded another youth, but after time passed, he realised that the youth he was nurturing was nothing but a wolf in sheepskin. That youth eventually grew so powerful that he had the power to eradicate the entire Emperor Star Academy.

As he thought of this, his heart couldn’t help but to shudder from pain. The him from back then had truly placed that youth from before in extremely high regards, sparing nothing to nurture him. However, the events that happened later constantly and mercilessly rended his heart.

After Qin Wentian left the mountain, he headed back in the direction of his dorm. As he entered the school grounds, several gazes were focused on him, revealing expressions of interest.

“It’s Qin Wentian. I heard that he was brought to the courtyard belonging to the Disciplinary Committee. Now that he came out safely, naturally, the committee didn’t do anything to him.”

“Talent merits special treatment. If it was someone else who killed such a peak-level genius like Murong Feng, they would surely end up in dire straits. However, Qin Wentian is someone whose talent is even higher than Murong Feng’s. The title of number one belongs to him now.”

In the academy, many people were whispering and mumbling. If this was the case, wouldn't the Knight's Association be extremely infuriated? They would surely not allow the matter to end like this.

Qin Wentian hastened his steps, and as he approached his dorm, he called out, "Fatty!"

Fan Le poked his head out of the door before walking out in Qin Wentian's direction.

"Fatty, how are your injuries?" Qin Wentian contemplated Fan Le, only to see Fan Le grinning, "Nothing too major. Let's go and walk about in the academy."

"Good to hear that." Qin Wentian took note of the shifty look in Fan Le's eyes as puzzlement shone on his face. At the moment, the sound of someone sighing softly could be heard from within the dorm.

"Who's inside our dorm?" Qin Wentian asked, his expressions flickering.

"Who else but Little Rascal? That little mutt must be scampering around, let's go!" Fan Le pulled on the Qin Wentian's arm, trying to lead him away. Qin Wentian remained motionless and swiftly made his way in the direction of the dorm. Very quickly, a figure

with her head bowed walked out.

Sheena's dainty hands were clutching her clothes. Her face was flushed with a redness comparable to the sunset. She secretly stole a few glance at Qin Wentian, and upon seeing his startled look, her face began to grow boiling hot.

"It's not what you are thinking, I'm only here..... I'm only here to visit him." Sheena stuttered.

"Alright." Qin Wentian nodded his head at Sheena, causing the redness on her cheeks to deepen even further as she stomped her foot and turned to Fan Le, "It's all your fault!"

Abruptly, Sheena turned and left at top speed, leaving behind the startled Qin Wentian, who looking at Fan Le in bewilderment. On his way here, he had been worried about that damn fatty. It seemed like he was worrying for nothing.

"Fatty, you are awesome." Qin Wentian extended his thumbs, showing a thumbs-up gesture.

"Although I know that you won't believe whatever I say, I still have to say this: I don't have any intents on Sheena." Looking at the sneaky smile on Qin Wentian's face, Fatty abruptly said with a straight face, "Actually, the one I like is you."

Countless black lines appeared on Qin Wentian's head. This time round, it was Fatty's turn to shamelessly burst out into laughter.

In addition, seeing how Fatty was humming a little tune while adopting an asking-to-be-beaten look on his face, Qin Wentian had no choice but to admit defeat.

“Let’s go to the honor courtyard to raise the levels of our medallions.” Fan Le strided forwards, Qin Wentian following close behind with lines of laughter on his face. The grades of their medallions were immediately raised to the 3rd level.

The battle earlier had concluded in their favor. Qin Wentian and Fan Le replaced the rankings of Murong Feng and Du Hao. And because they were now two of the top 3 students, they would be able to instantly upgrade their medallion to the 3rd level.

After raising the levels of their medallions, the two of them went to the Heavenly Star Pavilion. A 3rd level medallion would grant them access to the 3rd level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

The Heavenly Star Pavilion consisted of 9 levels. Each level stored several different cultivation arts as well as innate techniques. This time around, the two of them entered the 3rd level. The 3rd level of the pavilion consisted of top grade Arterial Circulation Realm cultivation arts as well as top-tier, human-grade innate techniques.

The Subduing Dragon Fists was precisely a top-tier, human-grade innate techniques.

The students of the Emperor Star Academy all had a question on their minds: in the Heavenly Star Pavilion, just what was stored in

the levels above the 6th level? Hence, it was the wish of every student to be able to step into the pavilion's 7th to 9th levels.

Rumor had it that once, in the history of the academy, there had been a student of monstrous aptitude who once managed to enter those three levels. However, that student eventually ended up betraying the Emperor Star Academy and almost caused the entire academy to be destroyed. Regarding this rumor, the Emperor Star Academy had never once confirmed it, and thus, this remained a mere rumor.....

AGM 064 – Yanaro

Rows of ancient-looking bookshelves decorated the spacious region inside the 3rd level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. On the bookshelves themselves were many different types of books and secret manuals being stored there.

“Top-grade Arterial Circulation cultivation arts as well as top-tier human-grade innate techniques... all of these would be considered priceless treasures in Sky Harmony City, but here on the 3rd level, these various arts and techniques are as common as clouds. Anyone can go ahead and choose what they want to cultivate at will, with no restrictions.” Qin Wentian silently sighed; this was what having resources culminated in. Wanting to nurture an elite, other than taking into account the individual’s talent, vast resources were required as well.

Qin Wentian did not select any cultivation art. What he was looking for was an innate technique.

“Mountain Descending Palms, Willowy Steps Body Movement Technique, Kinetic Swordplay.”

Upon seeing the Kinetic Swordplay, the light in Qin Wentian’s eyes brightened as he exclaimed, “Fatty, over here.”

Fan Le walked over as Qin Wentian passed the innate technique over to him, “The ability bestowed upon you by your Astral Soul is extremely suitable in using the power of thought to manipulate the movements of objects. This techniques recorded within this set of

Kinetic Swordplay forms the initial basis of using movement manipulation techniques. Are you interested?”

“Let me take a look.” As Fan Le analyzed the innate technique, his eyes began to glimmer.

Qin Wentian continued his search. Currently, because he already possessed the Dragon Subduing Fists as well as the Thousand Hand Imprint, his attacks were already exceedingly tyrannical and domineering. Hence, he had no intentions or interest in selecting another attack-type innate technique.

“9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique.” Qin Wentian halted his steps as he pondered about this particular technique with an expression of interest on his face. This innate technique was merely a top-tier, human-grade technique of the 3rd level. To think that it had such an awe-inspiring name.

“9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique, Manual Level: Arterial Circulation.” Qin Wentian selected the innate technique and flipped through the pages of the secret manual. He was instantly drawn to the technique and was soon immersed in the methods of cultivating it, a sharp glint of light flickering in his eyes.

So it turned out that this secret manual was only the first portion of the 9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique which was suitable for someone at the Arterial Circulation Realm to cultivate. However, although it was merely rated at the Arterial Circulation level, the methods contained within were filled with complexity. One actually had to swallow demon spirits and obtain their

demonic essences before shaping the essences into the shape of a Garuda's mark.

Moreover, this particular technique, although it stated that the manual's level was for the Arterial Circulation realm, it did not specify the number of volumes it had in total for this innate technique.

With the secret manual in hand, Qin Wentian walk forwards towards a desk, approaching the Elder in charge of the 3rd floor.

“Elder, this 9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique, does the Heavenly Star Pavilion contain the volumes for the advanced levels?” Qin Wentian inquired.

The elder cast a glance at Qin Wentian with a smiled. “I urge you not to cultivate this particular innate technique. Although we do have the Yuanfu level manual for this, it is placed on the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. Who knows how long would it take for you to be able to access that level? In addition, if you want to cultivate this Arterial Circulation-level manual to the large-success stage, you would need to kill and ingest countless numbers of flying-type demonic beasts and obtain their demonic essences before attempting to form the Garuda's mark.

“Not only that, the difficulty that lies behind comprehending the insights of this particular innate technique is extremely high.”

Qin Wentian understood the kind intentions behind this Elder's words and took them into consideration. “In the 3rd level, are

there any better body movement innate techniques?”

“If you are able to completely master the 9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique, there are no other techniques here at the 3rd level able to outclass it.” The Elder shook his head and added, “but like as I said, the difficulty to master this is just too high.”

“Understood, thank you for the advice.” Qin Wentian smiled as he continued his search. Initially, he had wanted to look for innate techniques that complemented his 2nd Astral Soul condensed from the Dreamcast Constellation. But despite his efforts, there wasn’t even a single dream-type innate technique in the entirety of the Heavenly Star Pavilion’s 3rd level. This specific type of innate technique was too rare, and because Qin Wentian did not have any dream-type innate techniques to complement his Astral Soul, he wasn’t able to bring out the full effectiveness of his abilities.

Naturally, even though there weren’t any dream-type innate techniques to complement his Astral Soul, the effect of its abilities, when unleashed, would still be extremely powerful. After all, this was an Astral Soul condensed from the 5th Heavenly Layer.

In the end, Qin Wentian still chose to borrow the 9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique, while Fan Le, other than the Kinetic Swordplay, decided to borrow one other innate technique from the pavilion as well. Soon after that, the two of them departed from the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

However, just as they were on the way back to their dorms, they found that their way was blocked.

Members of the Knight's Association were blocking their paths, and upon seeing their faces, Fan Le's eyes narrowed as the coldness within them reached the absolute limit. These people were exactly the same members who had impaled him with countless spears back then when he was in the Dreamsky Forest. These members were all seniors, the Knight's Association's elites. The weakest among them was stronger than Murong Feng.

The members had a chilly look upon their faces as well, a tangible coldness that caused several students to train their sights over here. That day, when Qin Wentian chose to kill Murong Feng, he had completely trampled upon the pride of the Knight's Association, even pursuing them all the way and finally killing Murong Feng in their territory. Not only that, the academy chose not to pursue the matter, releasing Qin Wentian without further punishment.

The Knight's Association were of course immensely incensed. The association was mainly consisted of members from the aristocratic clans. All their lives, it had always been them stepping over others. Now that the roles were reversed, the matter between Orchon and Qin Wentian was no longer a private matter between the two of them. Since they were the one getting trampled upon, this had already become a matter of prestige and face for the entire Knight's Association.

"Those old fellows of the academy actually pardoned you so easily." A youth with a smile on his face stood behind Qin Wentian as he commented. One could only see coldness embedded within that smile.

“His lack of politeness is incredible.” Upon hearing that the Elders of the academy were being referred to as ‘those old fellows’, Qin Wentian curled his lips into a smile while a sharp light radiated from his eyes.

“Where is Orchon?” Qin Wentian continued in an icy tone.

“Orchon?” The light in the youth’s eyes flickered. Because of the incident with Qin Wentian, the prideful Orchon had been confined by his Clan. Unless he stepped into the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, he would remain imprisoned until he broke through.

Qin Wentian was the adopted son of the Qin Clan’s Qin Chuan. Earlier, when they heard that Ye Lang had been killed by Qin Wentian, many in their aristocratic circle had even sarcastically ridiculed Ye Lang. In their eyes, they all look down upon the descendants of the Wu King. They didn’t understand why the mighty Ye Clan wanted to spare so much effort on eradicating a Clan that had already fallen to such dire straits—the Qin Clan.

After all, it was known that the Qin Clan was in such a destitute state that the number of Yuan Meteor Stones they had could be counted on one hand.

But who knew that this adopted son of the Qin Clan actually had extraordinary world-shaking talent, eventually killing Orchon in the Emperor Star Academy’s arena as well as slaying Murong Feng of the Knight’s Association. What was even more laughable was that,

in the past, this ant-like existence that they could have easily eradicated with the flick of a finger had already obtained the academy's favor and good graces.

Now, if they wanted to kill him, they had to be wary and take into consideration the academy's attitude.

After all, they were very clear that the waters of the Emperor Star Academy were very deep. Not even the Royal Clan would needlessly dare to antagonise the academy.

“At this very moment, I imagine that Orchon is thinking of ways to kill you.” That youth spat the words out, causing the pupils of Qin Wentian's eyes to narrow before a cold smile broke out on Qin Wentian's visage. Upon close examination, Orchon's actions made sense because Qin Wentian himself was also constantly thinking of ways and methods to destroy Orchon.

“You brazenly killed a member of our Knight's Association. Why don't you guess how we are going to deal with you?” That youth continued. The gazes and glares from the members of the Knight's Association were like poisonous vipers, staring right at Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

Feeling the cold bloodlust gushing forth, the eyes of Qin Wentian and Fan Le narrowed. Although they wanted nothing more than to kill the other party, it was a pity that, as of now, the strength they wielded was still insufficient to do so.

“How regretful, the Emperor Star Academy forbids us from

killing fellow students. If not for that, both of you would have already died countless times.” The youth took a step forward and released a killing intent he released that surged towards Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

At the same time, all the members of the Knight’s Association, took a step forwards, shrinking the area of the circle. The pressure all of them emitted was so intense that it made Qin Wentian and Fan Le unable to breathe. Without a choice, the two of them took a step backwards as their countenance grew unsightly.

“The Royal Capital is different from Sky Harmony City. Even though you may be talented, it’s still better for you to keep a low profile. If not, wouldn’t it be a pity if you were killed before your talent was allowed to blossom?” The youth whispered with malice in his tone, taking another step forwards. The force of the step was so great that a rumbling sound could be heard as the earth broke apart from the impact. Rays of domineering and incomparably sharp spear lights were directed upon the body of Qin Wentian and Fan Le, threatening to pierce them.

The threat in his words was barely concealed. He had no intention to mask his obvious intent.

No matter how high a talent one possessed, it was useless if the person didn’t have time to grow.

“Stay your hand.” At this moment, a shout rang out. The members of the Knight’s Association turned their gaze in the direction of the voice, only to see a graceful silhouette appearing.

“Senior Sister Rain.” The youth gently smiled as he saw the source of the voice. This silhouette belonged to none other than a senior at the Yuanfu Realm, who was also the guest Elder that Fatty wanted to woo—Elder Rain

“Yanaro, as a senior, you are actually bullying the newcomers?” Rain stated somewhat disdainfully.

Yanaro, upon being scolded by Rain, still maintained the gentle smile on his face as he explained, “This newcomer is extremely arrogant. I only wanted to ‘discipline’ him lightly. But since Senior Sister have spoken for him.....”

Even before the sound of his voice faded, the body of Yanaro, flickered as he exploded into motion. Instantly, Qin Wentian felt a sense of danger, and swiftly after, he saw one of Yanaro’s fingers piercing through the air, emitting an aura that was as sharp as swords and sabres.

“You.....” Rain’s countenance fell. Even if she wanted to stop Yanaro now, it was too late. With a frozen expression, Qin Wentian frenziedly circulated the Astral Energy in his body, forming the Revolving Sea Imprint as the resounding echoes and howls of crashing tidal waves rang out. Despite the power of the Revolving Sea Imprint, Yanaro’s finger shone with an intense, resplendent light as it easily broke apart the imprint, landing on Qin Wentian’s palm.

Finishing what he wanted to do, Yanaro’s figure withdrew,

incomparably gracefully, while Qin Wentian rapidly stepped back, retreating so as to lessen the impact. His countenance turned extremely chilly upon inspecting his palm and noticing that the spot where Yanaro's finger had penetrated through was bleeding profusely.

“Let's hope you will be this lucky every time. “ Yanaro remarked to Qin Wentian before shifting his gaze to Rain. Soon after, he commanded the members of the Knight's Association to withdraw.

“Are you alright?” Rain looked to Qin Wentian. Concern could be heard in her voice.

“I'm fine, thank you Senior Sister.” Qin Wentian smiled. Since he had chosen to kill Murong Feng back then, he had already expected that he would not be able to lead a peaceful life in the academy. Despite so, he would never give up upon the path he had chosen simply because of a little fear.

On the contrary, he was anticipating these challenges.

After all these days, Qin Wentian had already understood a crucial point. No matter how strong one's backing was, it would never be as solid when compared to depending on one's own strength. Only when his individual strength was sufficient would he be able to control his own destiny.

AGM 065 – Astral Demonic Beast

Rain looked on. As the members of the Knight's Association departed, she stated, "Qin Wentian, although the academy values you, you have to know that your level of strength is still insufficient. It would be best if you tried not to further antagonise the members of the Knight's Association in the future. Due to the friction between you and them, there's no way the academy wouldn't be bothered to interfere with them and protect you should a clash occur."

"Understood." Qin Wentian nodded his head. While he looked at her departing back, the corners of his lips curled up into a smile that was filled with a cold sharpness.

Indeed, his present level of strength was insufficient, but unless they were capable of suppressing him forever, he would surely trample them to death one day, as he did to Murong Feng.

In any case, he had nothing to lose. He had no fear no matter what insidious plans the Knight's Association was plotting against him.

Now, he only needed to be concerned with one thing—to get stronger.

Only truly strong cultivators would not have to suffer looks of arrogance and pride from others.

Only truly strong cultivators would not need to wag their tails to

a stronger power.

“Senior Sister Rain.” At this moment, Fatty appeared beside Rain, his eyes sparkling with hints of laughter.

“Yes?” Rain smiled.

“Previously, I gained great enlightenment after I attended Senior Sister Rain’s lecture. I’m a weak and innocent boy, so in the future, if I have any questions regarding cultivation, could I seek out Senior Sister for help?” Fan Le said with a straight face while Qin Wentian, who was beside him, stared with amazement. The guts of this Fatty.....

“Sure, why not? Just look for me if you have any questions.” Rain gently laughed. She viewed both of them as her brothers. How could she even begin to guess at the shameless thoughts prevalent in Fatty’s mind.

“Many thanks, Senior Sister!” Flowers blossomed in Fatty’s heart. His smile was so bright that it was comparable to the radiance of the sun.

“Protect yourselves well, you two. I shall take my leave first.” Rain smiled and departed. Qin Wentian, looking at the way Fatty stared at the departing back view of Rain, suddenly felt an urge to knock Fatty on his head. “Damn Fatty. Haven’t you stared enough?”

“Nope.” Fatty grinned, as a shameless expression was displayed on his face. Winking at Qin Wentian, he replied, “Senior Rain is like a mature goddess, warm, kind and gentle... exactly my type!”

“She regards you merely as a little brother.” Qin Wentian burst his bubble as he exclaimed with contempt before starting leaving the area.

“What nonsense. Anyways, what do you know of love?” Fan Le rolled his eyes. A shameless smile appeared once again on his face as he thought of Rain’s answer to him. Humming a little tune, Fatty began walking after Qin Wentian.

After returning back to their dorms, Qin Wentian began cultivating the 9 Heavenly Garuda Technique. Just merely from this Arterial Circulation-level manual, Qin Wentian discovered that this innate technique was even more fearful when compared to his Thousand Hand Imprint. Cultivating this technique merely at the Arterial Circulation Level was already a terrifyingly difficult task. The Yuanfu-Level manual stored on the 6th level of the pavilion would most assuredly be a top-tier earth-grade technique; the difficulty in cultivating that manual was something he didn’t even dare to imagine.

Naturally, before he obtained the Yuanfu-Level manual, he did not have to worry about it. He only needed to focus all of his attention in cultivating the Arterial Circulation-level manual first.

The mastery of the 9 Heavenly Garuda Technique (Arterial Circulation-level) could be classified into four levels: Initial, Skillful, Perfect, and Godly.

To attain the Initial Level of mastery was easy. There was no other external criterias. One merely had to focus on practicing the techniques listed in the secret manual, and they would easily be able to achieve the Initial Level.

For the Skillful Level of mastery, other than needing to spend time comprehending the insights, one also had to devour the demonic spirits of flying demonic beasts in order to gain their demonic essences and fully master the techniques contained within.

For the Perfect and Godly Levels, the cultivator would need to ingest an astronomical amount of flying-type demonic beasts. Especially for the Godly level; once the cultivator stepped into this level, the mark of a Garuda would have been successfully formed. With merely a single leap, the cultivator would be able to traverse over 30m, akin to the Garuda spreading its wing. And upon stepping into the Yuanfu Realm, one would be able to fly with much greater speed compared to those cultivator at the same level of power.

During the following days, Qin Wentian immersed himself in practicing the Garuda Technique. The difficulty of this technique was many times tougher when compared to the Dragon Subduing Fists.

Other than that, he did not neglect his cultivation. To him, breaking through was a matter of utmost importance.

Naturally, Qin Wentian also attended the lectures conducted by elders and guest Elders as during this period of time.

Unknowingly, as time passed, the leaves on the trees of the Dreamsky Forest were no longer as lush and green as before. The fiery ball of fire in the sky emitted fiery waves of sunlight as spring passed, ushering in the new season of summer.

The new students gradually got used to life in the academy. Many of them, filled with hopes and dreams, had broken up into smaller groups and began exploring and tempering themselves within the Dark Forest. After their experiences in the Dreamsky Forest, they gradually got used to death. Death was no longer an occurrence that they feared so much. To be strong, one naturally had to risk their lives.

But still, as they witnessed their teammates dying one by one in the Dark Forest or facing death themselves, the wills in their hearts were no longer as resolute. This was true death, not some parlour tricks as compared to the dying experiences simulated from the Dreamsky Forest.

Although they were students of the Emperor Star Academy, in this hunt or be hunted environment, coming face to face with death was nothing surprising.

But it was precisely this sort of experiences that could enable them to temper their hearts.

In front of their dorms, Qin Wentian was resting his back on an ancient tree as he cast his gaze far off into the horizons.

It had been four months since he entered the Emperor Star Academy, but there was still no news regarding getting Qin Wu and Qin Chuan. Although Qin Wentian didn't say anything, he was tremendously worried in his heart.

He even forced himself not to seek out the news regarding the whereabouts of his 2nd uncle Qin He and the army Qin He was leading. Qin Wentian was worried that he wouldn't be able to control himself should anything untoward happen to Qin He.

He had lived in the Qin Residence for over 10 years. To him, that place was his home. Ever since the Ye Clan stepped into Sky Harmony City, everything had been extremely chaotic. The Qin Residence was set on fire, Qin Wu and Qin Chuan were imprisoned in some unknown location, Qin He and Qin Ye became embroiled in bloody battles, and Qin Yao, Qin Zhi and the rest of the younger generations were forced to seek refuge in a nearby country, not daring to return home.

Only him, because of his outstanding talent, was awarded a place in the Emperor Star Academy. But despite of this, the academy was still a place fraught with many dangers to him.

“Ye Clan.” Qin Wentian inclined his head, allowing the rays of sunlight to fall upon his face through the gaps of foliage provided by the ancient tree. His eyes radiated extreme coldness, as sharp as swords and sabres.

Just as the Ye Clan and Orchon would not spare him, he would also not spare the Ye Clan and Orchon. Of this, he was absolutely certain.

“I wonder how is sister Qin Yao and the others are faring in Snow Cloud Country. I hope they became stronger.” Qin Wentian closed his eyes. It was as if he could see the gentle and beautiful features of his sister, Qin Yao, standing in front of him.

“Qin Wentian.” At this moment, a voice echoed out, disrupting Qin Wentian’s thoughts. Shifting his gaze over, he saw a youth the same age as him approaching from a distance. This youth was none other than one of the new students who lived near him and Fan Le.

“Zero, what’s up?” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Recently, there have been many students who ventured into the Dark Forest to temper themselves. The two of you are currently the strongest among the new students. Haven’t you ever had thoughts about going to the Dark Forest for practice?” Zero walked closer as he inquired. Although Qin Wentian had monstrous talent, he was extremely easy to get along with. The majority of the new students had relatively good relations with Qin Wentian.

“Enter the Dark Forest?” With traces of a smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s face, he stood up and stretched his body. “I’m ready, let’s go.”

He had already attained the Initial Level of mastery regarding the 9 Heavenly Garuda Technique. To step into the Skillful Level of mastery, he would need to hunt flying-type demonic beasts.

“I wished to temper myself over there as well. Do you mind if we

formed a group?” Zero felt joy in his heart upon hearing that Qin Wentian intended to enter the Dark Forest. Although his cultivation level had broken through to the 2nd level of Arterial Circulation, he was only at its initial stages. Compared to Qin Wentian, he was still some distance away. Naturally, it would be much safer for him if he grouped himself with Qin Wentian.

“Fine, prepare yourself. Once I’m ready I will call for you.” Qin Wentian remarked.

Once night descended, Qin Wentian and Fan Le woke Zero up. The three of them and a snowy puppy left the academy grounds and made their way towards the Dark Forest. The late timing made Zero somewhat disgruntled, but he also understood the need for secrecy in case members of the Knight’s Association were spying on Qin Wentian..

When the party arrived at the outskirts of the Dark Forest, it was already close to dawn of the second morning. The forest’s perimeter was full of human activity. The Dark Forest was a favorite cultivation spot for members of the aristocratic clans and students of the various academies. Naturally, it was also the Heaven and Hell for the risk-takers.

“There are only low level demonic beasts in the outskirts. Let’s head in deeper.” Qin Wentian remarked. Demonic beasts below the 4th level were useless for his cultivation of the Garuda Technique. It was extremely tough to hunt demonic beasts of the 4th level and above, not to mention, flying-type demonic beasts. From this, one could see the difficulty in cultivating the 9 Heavenly Garuda Technique.

Three men and one beast started sprinting towards the depths of the Dark Forest, drawing to them attention and excitement from other students.

“Halt.” Abruptly, Fan Le shouted. The three of them stopped their steps as they halted. Because of the Astral Soul he condensed, Fatty’s senses were the sharpest.

“Our luck is pretty good. There’s a flying-type 4th level demonic beast nearby. However, our luck is pretty bad too. That 4th level demonic beast is actually a Purple Thunder Condor, an Astral Demonic Beast. Not only that, it has already noticed our presence.” Fatty smiled bitterly as the expression on Zero’s face stiffened.

Astral Demonic Beasts were akin to Stellar Martial Cultivators. In fact, they were comparable to the purest type of Stellar Martial Cultivators like Qin Wentian. Even without condensing an Astral Soul, they could easily absorb the Astral Qi from the Constellations to aid in their growth and maturation.

This was the talent granted to Astral Beasts. All Astral Beasts would be able to mature and evolve. And along with their evolution, their affinity with the constellations would grow increasingly stronger, allowing them to absorb Astral Qi from higher Heavenly Layers.

For example, the Purple Thunder Condor would bathe itself in starry radiance during its growth stage to absorb the faint Astral Qi within. In this manner, it continued to grow and mature to the

point where it would be able to sense lightning-types constellations from the 1st Heavenly Layer. And after they matured to a certain stage, their affinity would be strengthened to a point where they would be able to sense and absorb the Astral Qi emitted from lightning-types constellations from the 2nd and 3rd Heavenly Layer

This was the terrifying aspect that all Astral Beasts possessed. The more powerful an Astral Beast was, the stronger its affinity would be.

Hence, now that the first challenge they met was actually a 4th level Astral Demonic Beast, the Purple Thunder Condor, how could Zero not be depressed?

AGM 066 – Blood Ember Fruit

When compared to human cultivators, a 4th level demonic beast's cultivation would be around between the 1st and 3rd level of Arterial Circulation. This Purple Thunder Condor was considered to be one of the strongest 4th level demonic beast, with a cultivation base at the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation. In addition to the power of flight it possesses, it was extremely tough to deal with.

In the airspace above the ancient trees, arcs of purplish lightning flashed as a crackling sound echoed. The arcs of purple lightning landed upon one of the ancient trees, instantaneously exploding it. The remnants of lightning could be seen flickering around the area the lightning had struck.

Qin Wentian and the rest raised their heads and looked at the gigantic Purple Thunder Condor hovering in the airspace above them. Its ferocious, bestial eyes glinted with a cruel light. It already regarded them as nothing but prey to be hunted.

“Boom, boom.....” A column of purple lightning, as thick as a human's arm, explosively cascaded down towards where the three of them was standing.

The countenance of Qin Wentian's party froze for an instant. Moving like the wind, the three of them splitted off in three different directions, dodging the lightning-based attack. An enormous crater could be seen on the ground in the place where they stood previously. The intensity of that attack caused a slight, lightning-element wind as an aftermath. As the wind began

billowing, it gave off a painful, prickling sensation when it blew against their skin.

“Boss, go draw its attack.” Fatty righteously commanded. Among them, Qin Wentian possessed the strongest attack and defense. He was also the only one that remotely had the chance to dodge the condor’s lightning-based elemental attacks.

“My good brother indeed.” Qin Wentian scolded in a low voice. But then again, Fatty’s judgement was right. Qin Wentian’s whole body was stained with dirt and dust as he shivered. Because of the Purple Thunder Condor, an incredible amount of energy was being built up in the air above him, but an instant later, Qin Wentian’s body flickered, displaying excellent footwork. His body was like a willow leaf dancing exquisitely, floating with the wind, and although the lightning struck the ground extremely near to him, it never came into direct contact with him.

“Evil beast, bring it on. Can you try to be more accurate?” Qin Wentian hollered at the Purple Thunder Condor hovering in the air. This was the first time that Qin Wentian utilised the Garuda Movement Technique in actual combat.

Under the provocation, murderous rage could be seen welling up in the eyes of the condor as it gathered even more Astral Energy, continuously spitting out lightning beams from its beak.

“F*ck.” Fatty, exhibiting the opposite of utmost brotherly affection, immediately ran away, jumping on the branches of the ancient trees some distance away. Almost immediately after, Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Technique to its limits in

order to avoid the lightning strikes, which were so powerful that they could surely disintegrate him into dust if he came in contact. However, either by miracle or great luck, Qin Wentian always managed to dodge the continuous lightning strikes by the skin of his teeth

“Evil beast, is that all you can do?” Qin Wentian arrogantly continued his provocation. The Purple Thunder Condor visibly trembled with anger, obviously irritated by Qin Wentian’s words. Letting out a shrill cry, the condor angled its body as it dove through the air, flying towards Qin Wentian.

Arcs of lightning were discharged every few moment from the beak of the condor that wanting to bury Qin Wentian in the middle that onslaught of lightning and thunder.

“How fierce.” Standing on top of a nearby tree, Fan Le growled.

Upon witnessing how the events were unfolding, Fan Le was getting worried for Qin Wentian. Clods of earth and dust were dislodged and flying about every time the lightning struck the ground, threatening to bury Qin Wentian alive. The Purple Thunder Condor had no intentions of stopping. It swooped downwards, wanting to devour Qin Wentian’s flesh.

Qin Wentian cut an extremely pathetic figure as he dodged the numerous falling clumps of earth. His eyes flashed with a cold glint of resoluteness. At this moment, he was still incomparably calm; the Divine Energy in his body had already been activated and was flowing to his arms in a frenzy.

Sounds of ocean waves crashing echoed as the Divine Energy was compacted into the shape of the Revolving Sea Imprint. At this very instant, nine Astral Arrows were explosively released by Fan Le, soaring through the air, speeding towards the condor with nine rays of golden light trailing behind them.

Violent gusts of wind ensured, alongside a pitiful shriek as the Purple Thunder Condor discovered that it could no longer fly. The astral wind created by the nine golden Astral Arrows pierced mercilessly against its body, and the energy contained within prevented the condor from flying.

“Die!” Another Revolving Sea Imprint exploded out amidst the earth. The condor let out a miserable keen as it helplessly closed its wings around its body, attempting to block the strike before falling down from the air. The impact carved a huge crater in the ground.

As the dust settled, Fan Le leaped down from the tree and approached. Looking at Qin Wentian, whose whole body was covered with dust and dirt, he cheerfully patted Qin Wentian on his back and said, “That was so impressive!”

“Scram.” Qin Wentian spat out the earth that got stuck in his teeth. Looking at the body of the condor, he sighed in his heart. “To think that I need to use myself as bait just to kill a demonic beast of this level. Not easy at all.”

“Other than this method, we would have never been able to defeat the condor. What a pity that Little Rascal was not a flying-

type demonic beast. If not, you could just consume its essence.” Fan Le laughed as he cast a glance at the snowy puppy. Little Rascal, which had been sitting on its hind legs, glared at Fan Le in an extremely adorable manner.

“However, you are truly awesome. If it were me, I would surely be dead if I came across the Purple Thunder Condor.” Zero walked over, feeling somewhat depressed. The disparity between them was too great.

“It seems like being in the same party as you was a mistake. I would have no chance to temper myself at all.”

“Don’t worry, we will leave it the land-type demonic beasts for you to deal with.” Qin Wentian grinned as he used a dagger to cut open the head of the condor, retrieving the demonic core within. The palm-size demonic core was filled with terrifying lighting energy. This was a demonic core from a 4th-level Astral Beast. To lightning-elemental cultivators, this core was priceless.

“Cores from flying-type demonic beasts belong to me. As for land-type beasts, the two of you will split them equally among yourself, alright?” Qin Wentian inquired as he looked at Fan Le and Zero. Fan Le naturally would not go against Qin Wentian. And as for Zero, upon witnessing the combat ability of both of his companions, he understood that he did not have the qualifications to disagree.

Qin Wentian kept the demonic core. He extended his palms, and in the middle of his palms, a faint mark appeared. A strong power of absorption could be felt from the mark as Qin Wentian pressed

his palm downwards against the body of the condor. The mark was emitting white rays of light as the faint shadow of a Purple Thunder Condor could be seen getting absorbed by his palm, flowing into Qin Wentian's body.

“Demonic Beasts naturally possessed demonic spirits. The Garuda Movement Technique requires me to devour the demonic spirit and absorbed the demonic essences within. The only way to hasten the process would be if the demonic beast still possessed a core to aid me in my absorption.” Qin Wentian smiled as he explained to Fan Le and Zero. This was why it was so tough to master the 9 Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique.

After he finished, they continued tempering themselves within the Dark Forest. And every time they met a land-type demonic beasts, Qin Wentian and Fan Le who leave it to Zero to deal with, only helping in moments of crises.

Soon after, a month passed by. Their bodies were all covered with dirt stains that they accumulated from fighting in the terrain. However, the aura they exuded underwent some transformation, especially the look in their eyes, which was many times sharper than before. Needless to say, their combat abilities had risen by another notch.

Finally, upon discovering a nearby lake, the three of them dashed forwards, jumping into the water with a speed similar to that of ferocious wolves preying on helpless deer. After they took a much-needed bath, a crackling fire was built to dry their robes on the bank.

Half naked, Qin Wentian was currently cultivating underneath a tree. A demonic core was clutched in his palm as he unceasingly absorbed the energy within. Rays of white light could be seen emanating from the demonic core, transforming into the image of the flying-type demonic beast from back when it was still alive, before being absorbed into Qin Wentian's body. After the demonic energies flowed through his Stellar Meridians into his inner organs, energy channels, orifices and bone structure, Qin Wentian could perceive that his body was somehow stronger than before.

Through this period of time, along with the continuous absorption of demonic essence, Qin Wentian easily noticed the rapid improvement of his Garuda Movement Techniques.

“Woof woof.....” At this moment, Little Rascal appeared, running in circles around him. Puzzlement shone on Qin Wentian's face as he asked, “You want me to follow you?”

Little Rascal gave a bark, indicating agreement, before sprinting away. Seeing this, a light of surprised flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes before he shouted, “Fatty, Zero, let's move out.”

As they retrieved the robes that had been toasted dry, he dashed off in the direction of Little Rascal. Fan Le and Zero could do nothing but scratch their heads in bewilderment, but they eventually followed after him.

Little Rascal's speed grew increasingly faster, forcing the trio to increase their speed as well. Little Rascal led them into a mountain valley, where the terrain was arduously steeped. Here, many different varieties of rare plants and trees could be seen.

“Someone’s in combat.” Qin Wentian and Fan Le locked their gazes together. Little Rascal led them upwards, and after climbing to the top of a small hill, they cast their glance downwards to the source of the commotion in the valley. Qin Wentian’s party narrowed their eyes as they frowned.

“Fish-scaled Pythons.”

In the valley, there were numerous snake-type demonic beasts of immense sizes. Qin Wentian had once saved Liu Yan from this particular breed of snake demons in the Dark Forest.

The might they wielded was extremely terrifying. A particularly gigantic snake that coiled itself around the trunk of an ancient tree, spitting poisonous mist intermittently. The body of this enormous snake was covered with numerous injuries.

At this moment, there was a group of people that was fighting against the Fish-scaled Pythons.

“Students of the Emperor Star Academy.” Surprise shone in Zero’s eyes. The human cultivators, all about 17 to 18 years of age, were at either the 3rd or the 4th level of Arterial Circulation. All of them held nothing back and released their Astral Souls, indicating that they were all Stellar Martial Cultivators.

“You know them?” Qin Wentian asked as he looked to Zero.

“That person is named Logan, a member of the academy. I’ve met him before.” Zero pointed to a cultivator who emitted the aura of peak 4th level Arterial Circulation.

“They are fighting for the spiritual fruits in the tree.” Squinting his eyes, Fan Le looked at the enormous snake coiled around the trunk of a tree. Above the tree were countless bright red fruits with skins coloured so vividly that it was as though the fruits were bleeding.

“Rare and precious spiritual fruits would naturally have a demonic beast standing guard over them. But what is that fruit?” Qin Wentian looked towards Fan Le as he inquired. He glanced at Little Rascal from the corner of his eyes; this little fellow actually knew of this and led them here for this purpose?;

“Blood Ember Fruits. This type of fruit is extremely beneficial for cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Level by expanding the energy channels and opening up a new circular pathway, thus facilitating breakthroughs for Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators. Not only that, this fruit could also be further refined into the Blood Ember Pellets, which provide even stronger effects.” Fan Le intoned in a low voice. Hearing this, a fiery light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

In the Arterial Circulation Realm, cultivators used Astral Energy to constantly nourish and temper their bodies, stimulating their acupuncture points and expanding their energy channels. The Blood Ember Fruits would enable the cultivators to achieve twice the results with only half the amounts of effort, greatly aiding Arterial Circulation Realm Cultivators in their breakthroughs. No

wonder the fruits was capable of invoking such a huge commotion. there were some who were even willing to sacrifice their lives for it!

At this moment, the situation was not looking good for Logan's party.

“Blood Ember Fruits.” Qin Wentian exclaimed as the glow in his eyes brightened. The current him desperately needed to increase his own strength. There were still many things waiting for him to accomplish!

AGM 067 – Fall Out

Logan was currently fighting against the 5th-level Fish-Scaled Python that was coiled around the Blood Ember Tree. Upon noticing the arrival of Qin Wentian's party, he hastily exclaimed, "Brothers from the Academy, please help us! This python is extremely tough to deal with."

Qin Wentian had caused such a commotion when he first joined the Emperor Star Academy, and thus, there were many students who knew of him. Not only that, Logan had personally witnessed the fight between Qin Wentian and Murong Feng, so he knew that the martial prowess Qin Wentian possessed was several times stronger when compared to a cultivator at the same level.

"Should we help?" Zero inquired. Currently, although the situation looked bad for Logan and his party, it wasn't so bad that they would lose the battle that quickly. The chances of victory looked dim since Logan was clashing alone against the 5th-level python. Both the man and the snake were covered with injuries.

If the situation continued, it would surely end in defeat for Logan and his party. The reason why they lasted so long was all due to the efforts undertaken by Logan, who temporarily suppressed the Fish-Scaled Python that was coiling around the tree.

"The crucial point is the 5th-level python that's guarding the Blood Ember Fruits. As long as we suppress it, Logan would be free to join forces with his party and slowly clear away the rest of the lower level Fish-Scaled Pythons with ease." Fan Le whispered.

Qin Wentian's eyes flickered. If they offered their help so readily, there might face some trouble when it was time to distribute the Blood Ember Fruits.

The human heart is hard to predict, especially when the treasure in question was the precious Blood Ember Fruits. Regarding the treacherous human heart, Qin Wentian had previously experienced it firsthand.

“Little Rascal, come here.” Qin Wentian intoned in a low voice. Instantly, a white blur dashed by, jumping up into Qin Wentian's arms. Qin Wentian whispered a few words to it before putting Little Rascal down to the ground, as it scampered away.

“Zero.” Qin Wentian shifted his gaze towards Zero.

“Yeah?” Zero exclaimed.

“You should leave here temporarily, I'm afraid that you might soon be in danger if you remain.” Upon hearing Qin Wentian's words, the expression on Zero's face grew unsightly. Such valuable spiritual fruits in front of him, and yet Qin Wentian had the audacity to ask him to leave at this moment. Seeing this, it was inevitable for Zero's imagination to run wild.

“If we have a dispute with Logan and his party later, it would be tough to protect you.” Qin Wentian explained. However, the unsightly expression still remained on Zero's face. He didn't even paused to say goodbye, as he turned his back, slowly walking away.

Seeing Zero's reaction, Qin Wentian couldn't help but to shake his head and sigh. The words he added as explanation had been discarded by someone he sincerely wanted to help. Not everyone was as easy going as Fan Le. Although he had fought alongside with Zero for many days, and even thought that they had develop a certain camaraderie, it appeared that Qin Wentian overestimated the depth of their relationship.

Zero's combat ability was relatively weak. Regardless of whether it was facing the pythons or Logan's party members, he would be at an disadvantage. If he had stayed, it would be tough for Qin Wentian and Fan Le to protect him. And thus, for Zero's own safety, Qin Wentian asked Zero to leave first. But who knew that Zero would misinterpret his intentions so quickly?

"They can't hold on for much longer." Fan Le whispered, pulling Qin Wentian back from his thoughts. Logan was slowly giving ground as he became suppressed by the 5th-level python. If they don't step in now, the other students of the Emperor Star Academy would soon be in danger.

"Friends, if we die here, you guys will have no chance of obtaining the Blood Ember Fruit. Let's join our strength together. This way, we would still have a sliver of hope. We can split the fruits later after we defeat this beast." Logan shouted at Qin Wentian and Fan Le. In such a crisis, both of their strength would be able to greatly tilt the scales in their favor.

Qin Wentian also understood what Logan was saying. If Logan and his party died, his and Fan Le's strength would also be

insufficient to obtain the Blood Ember Fruits.

“Fatty, don’t go all out. Let’s hold back some of our cards.” Qin Wentian whispered as his body erupted into motion, dashing forwards. In the instant Qin Wentian dashed out, Fan Le already released his Bow-type Astral Soul and resplendently fired out numerous astral arrows. As a long-distance fighter, Fatty was an expert at crowd-control.

A truly powerful archer could kill from 1,000 miles away without leaving behind any traces.

Fan Le’s arrows did not have sufficient power to pierce the scales of the lower level Fish-Scaled Pythons. Thus, he aimed for the eyes. The angle from which he fired the arrows was slanted in a particular degree, resulting in the eyes of the snakes getting blown out, instantly salvaging a battle that almost ended terribly.

Qin Wentian had already arrived in front of the 5th-level Fish-Scaled Python. At such a close distance, he could sense that the power of this python exceeded that of a human with a cultivation base at the 5th level of Arterial Circulation.

Seeing the approaching Qin Wentian, the python spat out a glob of poisonous mist. Qin Wentian quickly held his breath, and in the next moment, the tail of the python swept out, smashing directly towards Qin Wentian.

“Boom.” Qin Wentian stepped hard on the ground, narrowly avoiding the tail of the Python. As the tail swept past him, he

quickly got into position and continued dashing towards the enormous python.

“Rumble.” A Diamond Imprint smashed against the python’s abdomen, causing it to howl in rage. Lowering its head and opening its maw, the neck of the python shot forth in a bid to devour Qin Wentian.

Three Astral Arrows instantly whistled through the air and appeared out of nowhere, piercing the eyes of the enormous python. And at the same time, Logan’s Axe-type Astral Soul glowed with a brilliant light as an Astral Axe materialized in his hands. Grabbing the Astral Axe with a roar of rage, Logan leaped in the air, moving with a speed as fast as lightning, with the intention of chopping down on the python’s weakness: an area 7 inches below its head.

Seeing the maw of the python closing in, Qin Wentian rapidly increased the number of steps he made on the ground. The extremely faint, almost imperceptible Garuda’s mark on his back lit up as he activated the movement technique, making his body as light as a swallow. Qin Wentian’s body transformed into a blur of shadows, gracefully dodging about. Although the maw lunged downwards, it hit nothing but empty air.

In that previous instance when he executed the Garuda Movement Technique, Qin Wentian had a strong feeling that his current mastery had already reached the Skillful Level.

“Kill!” Qin Wentian hollered with rage as he sent out a palm strike. His Revolving Sea Imprint emanated a terrifying pressure,

directly smashing the 5th level demonic python on its head.

Logan leaped onto the back of the python and howled, chopping furiously down with his axe. He was aiming for the 7-inch area below the python's head.

The enormous body of the python trembled as it struggled frantically. However, soon after, it slumped towards the ground, dead.

“Hu.....” Logan drew in a deep breath and smiled towards Qin Wentian. “Thank you for your help. Now, let's kill the other low-level pythons.”

Qin Wentian nodded his head in agreement. After the death of this 5th level python, the rest of the snakes wasn't much of a threat. Qin Wentian and Fan Le quickly joined their strengths with members from Logan's party, and together they easily cleared the remaining snakes.

“Haha.” Logan laughed loudly as he looked towards Qin Wentian. “You are indeed the top ranked student among the new batch. Qin Wentian, it was all thanks to you. If not, we would have had to put in slightly more effort to settle the little matter back then.”

“Slightly more effort? Little matter back them?” Looking at Logan's carefree laughter, Qin Wentian's eyebrows, twitched involuntarily. His eyes glinted with a sharp light, which was reflected on the smile that was plastered on his face. The current

him was no longer the naive, innocent youth from back then.

“Qin Wentian, to thank you for your contributions, I shall graciously take the lead and reward you the pythons’ demonic cores. They are extremely valuable and would be able to fetch a good price if sold. These are all for you.” Logan spoke in a manner that appeared to be extremely generous, but his words sounded extremely laughable to the ears of Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

Take the lead to reward him?

Were it not for his and Fan Le’s efforts, Logan and his party members would have died in the Dark Forest.

Although Qin Wentian didn’t claim credit for his help, Logan’s words obviously meant that he treated them as fools.

“Hmm, I have no interests in these demonic cores. Why don’t I take the lead and award them to you instead?” Hearing Qin Wentian’s reply, Logan narrowed his eyes as they flickered with a cold light.

“ You guys did indeed help us to settle the small matter back then, so there’s no need to stand on ceremony with us. Alright, if you don’t want the cores, I shall take the lead and award you a Blood Ember Fruit instead.” Laughing, Logan approached the Blood Ember Tree. The members of his party followed, leaving Qin Wentian and Fan Le behind.

“Seven of them, one at the 4th level and the others at the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation. They are a bit tough to deal with.” Fan Le lowly intoned.

“Hold on” Qin Wentian called out.

Logan and the rest turned their heads as they asked, “What’s the matter?”

“Earlier, we saved your life. We should be the one to decide the ratio of distribution regarding the Blood Ember Fruits.” Qin Wentian calmly replied.

“Is that so?” A cold light flickered in Logan’s eyes as he contemplated the surroundings. Shifting his gaze back towards Qin Wentian again, he smiled, “Since this is the case, we would have to show our ‘gratitude’ to ‘thank you’ for saving our lives.”

As the sound of his voice faded, the members of his party had already surrounded the two of them. Although the academy held Qin Wentian in high regards, no one would be able to trace Qin Wentian’s death back to him if Qin Wentian died in the Dark Forest.

“Would I be correct to say that if, hypothetically, there suddenly appeared two corpses, the bodies would soon be devoured by the ever hungry demonic beasts, leaving no traces behind?” Logan no longer masked the killing intent in his eyes. To obtain the spiritual fruits, he had already massacred some members of his original party, leaving behind only these seven members.

To him, Logan felt that it was already extremely generous of him to gift Qin Wentian with one Blood Ember Fruit. Who knew that some people who rather reject the toast that was offered, choosing to drink the wine of punishment instead?

Since that was the case, killing Qin Wentian would be for the best, since that way there would be a greater amount of the spiritual fruits to be split amongst them.

“I think so, yes.” Even before the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian’s body flickered as he erupted into motion, transforming into a blur of shadows.

Earlier, when he dodged the demonic python tailstrike, Qin Wentian’s mastery of the Garuda movement technique had reached the Skillful Level.

“Thud!” A loud sound echoed out. Qin Wentian had already arrived at in front of a cultivator at the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation. The speed of his movements caused everyone to be astounded.

Just as their bodies came into contact, Qin Wentian had already returned back to his original position. Bewildered, Logan’s party members only saw a hole in the chest of their comrade. Qin Wentian had already extinguished the life of his target with a single strike, pulverising the heart of his target into a bloody pulp.

“Cultivation is certainly tough, but since there are so many Blood

Ember Fruits, we could have evenly split the fruits between us. Why did you have to force the situation to such an extent?” As Qin Wentian released his Astral Souls, killing intent could be seen flaring in his eyes.

TN Note: Chinese saying, a snake’s weakness is 7 inches below its head. 打蛇打七寸 (direct tl) – hit snake hit 7 inch. Which means if you want to kill a snake, aim for 7 inches below it’s head.

AGM o68 – Who's The Oriole?

Logan and his party froze upon seeing Qin Wentian's speed. Not willing to put himself in danger, Logan pointed to a skinny youth in a green robe and commanded, "Go deal with it."

That skinny youth nodded his head and released one of his Astral Souls. The Astral Soul he released was condensed from a tree-type constellation, with many vines growing out of its trunk. At the same time, several vines materialized, wrapping themselves around his body as his body was shrouded by Astral Light. Evidently, this tree-type Astral Soul belonged to the control-type category that could be used to deal with cultivators who depended on speed.

"The two of you, go kill that fatass." Logan instructed. Qin Wentian held an extraordinary position in the academy, so without a doubt, he would be under the protection of the academy's elites. If he wanted to kill Qin Wentian, he had to extinguish any potential leaks, which meant they needed to kill Fan Le.

The two cultivators from Logan's party moved towards Fan Le. Upon witnessing this, Fan Le immediately retreated with breathtaking speed. After all, his cultivation was at the 2nd level of Arterial Circulation, which was lower than either of his opponents. Not only that, he specialised in long-distance combat. There was no way he would be willing to engage in a close quarters fight.

Logan and the rest of his party members surrounded Qin Wentian, not bothering to mask their killing intents.

“You think you’re all-powerful because you killed Murong Feng? Although his cultivation is at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation, his methods were too soft, let alone his martial heart.” Logan coldly stated as a terrifying sharp Qi gushed forth from his Axe-type Astral Soul.

“Do it.” At Logan’s command, the tree-type cultivator waved his hands, sending vines to lock Qin Wentian in position. Logan took a big step forwards and chopped downwards with his Astral Axe, wanting to smash Qin Wentian into pieces.

Qin Wentian stomped on the ground countless times in an instant, his feet never ceasing their movements. Dodging towards the side, his body transformed into a blur of shadows that avoided the axe chop and long vines.

“Swoosh!” A cold ray of sword light flashed by, moving parallel to the sword user’s swift, wind-like steps. At the same moment, the fist of the last party member exploded out alongside the cries of a demonic bull, flying with great power towards Qin Wentian.

In a single breath of time, Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits while continuously dodging the three attacks. His movements were beyond exquisite, causing those who see it to sigh in envy. As for the fourth attack, the fist exploding forth with the might of a demonic bull, Qin Wentian shifted his body slightly before summoning the Astral Energy within his body, and sending out a Diamond Imprint palm strike that broke apart the faint shadow of the demonic bull hovering behind the fist.

The time it took for him to send out his palm strikes proved long enough for the Astral Axe and sword light to target him again. A sense of impending danger tingled his spine and yet, Qin Wentian was still incomparably calm. It was as though he could hear every movement in the wind.

At the instant before his head was crushed by that mighty axe, his body flickered like a phantom as he drifted away in retreat. The axe strike split the air next to him but the sword light had actually manage to draw blood, which dripped down from Qin Wentian's wound. Under the onslaught of the four members' attacks, not even Qin Wentian could remain unscathed. The level of difficulty was far from the fight he had with Murong Feng; every moment was filled with incomparable danger!

In the next exchange of blows, the sword actually pierced into Qin Wentian's body. Choosing to sacrifice his mobility for a chance to lessen the immense pressure, he decided to go for a dual exchange. A white light flashed by, and the next instant, the sword user had a dagger through his throat. The sword user released the hold on his sword and retreated rapidly, mumbling incoherently as blood flowed in great torrents between the fingers of the hands that he wrapped around his throat to stem the bleeding. However, it was too late for him.

Qin Wentian had no time to witness the death of the sword user. Pulling the sword out from his body and flinging it away, he dashed away with a coldness radiating from his eyes. The dagger had always been hidden on his body, perfect for instant kills. Once revealed, he had the element of surprise on his side, which enable him to kill the sword user in the lightning-fast exchange of blows.

Logan and the rest frenziedly chased after Qin Wentian, the scenes of the sword user dying with both his hands stained in blood still fresh in their minds. This was already the second member to die in the hands of Qin Wentian.

At the start of the battle, Qin Wentian had pulverised the heart of one of their members. And just a few moments earlier, he stabbed another through the throat.

The remaining three glared at Qin Wentian with hatred, their gazes akin to poisonous snakes.

Blood was dripping out from the wound in Qin Wentian's chest, dying his robes red. The earlier sword strike had managed to injure Qin Wentian, despite of utilizing the Garuda Movement Technique.

“Fascinating.”

At this moment, the voice of a stranger rang out. Qin Wentian and Logan's party members froze, as they looked towards the direction of that voice, only to see Fan Le dashing out in a sorry state. Traces of blood could be seen from the corner of his mouth, and his sleeves were torn, revealing the concealed arrow underneath. This meant that despite of using his hidden weapon, Fan Le had still been injured.

“We were betrayed.” Fan Le spat out a mouthful of blood as he arrived at the side of Qin Wentian. Behind him, other than the two

cultivators with whom Fan Le had fought, there were two other students close behind.

One of the two other individuals was a skinny looking youth with cold eyes and a long face that gave off a ruthless feel. At this moment, his lips were curled up in an unpleasant smile. This person was precisely the one who had spoken the word “Fascinating” just now.

Seeing the other person standing beside him, Qin Wentian narrowed his eyes when he realized who it was.

“Zero.” Qin Wentian coldly stated. Zero shifted his gaze over and exclaimed coldly, “Don’t blame me, you were the one who was heartless.”

“If you had remained behind earlier, I’m afraid you would have already become a dead man.” Qin Wentian calmly replied, “I only wanted you to leave here temporarily. When I obtained the Ember Blood Fruits, I would have given some of them to you, but to think that.....”

“Say whatever you want.” Zero icily replied.

“Why are you still wasting your time on this piece of crap. We protected him during our training session in the Dark Forest and even shared half of the demonic cores with him. Even so, he betrayed us without a word. Excellent.” Fan Le coldly exclaimed, as Qin Wentian shook his head in resignation. Fan Le was right, there was no need to explain anything to a person of such

character.

“Hehe.” The youth standing beside Zero coldly laughed. “Logan, Young Master Luo is nearby. I’ve already sent men to inform this of this. Do you know what you have to do now?”

“Luo Qianqiu.” Logan’s countenance froze as he shot icy stares at Zero. This bastard actually went to inform the Luo Qianqiu’s lackey.

Since Luo Qianqiu already knew about the Blood Ember Fruits, they would have no more chances left. Now, Logan could only try to maximise his own gains.

“Franklin, I’m willing to give these Blood Ember Fruits to Young Master Luo. However, several of my brothers died trying to obtain the fruits. Could you spare a fruit for each of my surviving brothers?” Logan inquired.

“There are only so many Blood Ember Fruits, and you want Young Master Luo to give them to you?” Franklin pointed to the Blood Ember Tree, to which Logan shifted his gaze. Instantly, as his gaze landed upon the trees, his legs involuntarily shuddered, as if he saw something inconceivable. His countenance grew extremely unsightly.

“Franklin, there’s still someone here.” The expressions on Logan’s face was extremely ugly to behold. On the Blood Ember Tree, there were only a few of the spiritual fruits remaining; the rest of the fruits had already been stolen by a mysterious party.

“What the f*ck happened? Someone stole the fruits while we were fighting!?”

“I don’t care about other variables. These Blood Ember Fruits, are you sure you still dare to keep them?” Franklin forcefully asked.

Logan’s face became unsightly as he fiercely screamed in his heart. Luo Qianqiu’s lackey was too domineering. But still, protecting his own life now was more important. After all, Luo Qianqiu was someone he couldn’t afford to antagonise.

“I’m willing to give all of the fruits to Young Master Luo.” Logan gritted his teeth as he forced the words out, causing Franklin to smile in satisfaction.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were watching by the side. When Logan said that the fruits were stolen, puzzlement couldn’t help but shine on their faces.

“I think I should be included in the discussion, no?” Qin Wentian calmly added.

As the sound of his voice faded away, the gazes of both Logan and Franklin landed on Qin Wentian. Logan silently remarked in his heart. Is this person an idiot? Meanwhile, a cold smile broke out on Franklin’s face.

“Is he also a student of the Emperor Star Academy?” For half a year, Franklin had followed Luo Qianqiu as he ventured into the Dark Forest for cultivation, so he had never returned to the academy during this period of time.

“The number one ranked out of all the new students, Qin Wentian.” Logan explained.

“So that’s the case.” Touching his chin, Franklin asked Qin Wentian, “Since you are a new student, you should learn how to respect your seniors. Are you going to give up your claim on the Blood Ember Fruits or not?”

“Fine, all the fruits belong to you.” Qin Wentian spread his hands out. Casting a glance at Fan Le, both of them turned around and walked away. Witnessing this situation occurring, Logan was dumbstruck. When did this fellow became so easy to push around?

But at this moment, they could see a snow white puppy climbing the trunk of the Ember Blood Tree and plucking off a Ember Blood Fruit with its paws. Moments after that, it extended its head out and adorably glanced at the people under the tree, blinking its eyes in confusion as if it was somewhat depressed at being discovered.

“F*ck, so the fruits were stolen by that beast.” Logan angrily shouted.

“That’s Qin Wentian’s pet.” Zero frantically exclaimed.

“Little Rascal, as for the remaining fruits on the tree, you can have them. Be sure to enjoy your meal.” A voice drifted over from far away, and upon hearing the command, Little Rascal threw the Blood Ember Fruit into its mouth and expanded in size. With a speed that defied logic, merely a few breath later, the remaining Blood Ember Fruits disappeared one by one into Little Rascal’s mouth.

“Quickly stop that little bastard!”

Franklin’s countenance transformed into something exceedingly fascinating to behold as he sped towards the Blood Ember Tree. However, they were too late. By the time they arrived, the entire hoard of the remaining Blood Ember Fruits had been eaten by Little Rascal. Turning into a blur of shadows, Little Rascal sped away, rushing down the mountain. As Logan and Franklin and the rest of their members chased after it, they could see that inside the mouth of Little Rascal was a bag filled with the previously stolen Blood Ember Fruits.

“Evil Beast.”

“Little Bastard.”

Upon seeing this, Franklin and Logan hollered with rage, and they frantically increased their speed. Little Rascal had purposely slowed itself down to taunt them earlier, but now that its mission had been accomplished, Little Rascal upped its speed to another level as its body flickered, disappearing from view.

Somewhere far away, Qin Wentian and Fan Le displayed brilliant smiles on their faces and laughed uproariously while imagining their pursuers' outrageous reactions.

This little fellow, what a useful pet!

AGM 069 – Meeting Again

Two hours later, several silhouettes appeared in the same mountain valley. The one in the lead was a young cultivator about 16 to 17 years of age. Possessing a calm disposition and an otherworldly grace, he gave off a feeling of an insurmountable mountain. Just by merely standing there, one could almost feel radiance emanating out of him, so bright that it seemed as though everyone nearby merely served as a background, enhancing the contrast and bringing him out with a greater brilliance.

Logan and the rest stood around the youth, feeling extremely apprehensive. Naturally, they failed to catch Little Rascal. That bastard led them on a merry go round chase for a long time before ditching them, and when they made their way back to their original spot, Luo Qianqiu and the rest of his entourage had already arrived.

“Where are the Blood Ember Fruits?” The sound of Luo Qianqiu’s voice was calm, without any traces of emotions. But just from hearing that sentence alone, tremors spread down Logan’s spine as his whole body tensed. He respectfully replied, “Young Master Luo, Qin Wentian cunningly delayed us in purpose while instructing the demonic beast he reared to steal away all the Blood Ember Fruits that we wanted to present to Young Master Luo.”

Franklin approached Luo Qianqiu as he whispered a few sentences to him. Even then, there was no change in his expression.

Ranked one among the new batch of students, Qin Wentian?

Luo Qianqiu had no interest in this..

“Go flush him out.” Luo Qianqiu commanded quietly. Logan, immediately bowed low and replied with confidence, “Logan will definitely do his best.”

After pledging this, Logan led several others away, chasing after the direction Qin Wentian was last seen in.

“This mountain valley is very well hidden. Go and look around and see if there are any more valuable treasures nearby.” Luo Qianqiu commanded. Upon hearing the commands, the men behind him immediately dispersed in all four directions, their bodies flickering as they moved. It was as if Luo Qianqiu’s words were an imperial decree that couldn’t be defied.

Very quickly, only Franklin and Zero remained behind at Luo Qianqiu’s side.

“Zero, a new student of the Emperor Star Academy, is willing to obey all commands and follow Young Master Luo from now on.” Zero bowed low. He was very certain of Luo Qianqiu’s position and status within Emperor Star Academy.

A genius sent by Heaven, Luo Qianqiu was also ranked one among the new batch of students when he first joined the

academy. Not only that, he could effortlessly dominate even the 2nd year seniors. A year later, he joined the Asura Faction and assumed one of its leadership positions.

In addition to Luo Qianqiu's inconceivably strong talent, the cultivation arts and innate techniques that he cultivated were extremely terrifying. Not only that, he hailed from an extraordinary background, and thus not many would be willing to offend him. Other than having great talent, he was exceedingly hard working in his cultivation. Almost everyday, he could be found tempering himself in the Dreamsky Forest, dueling all challengers until he died of injuries before starting the whole process again.

Since he could already be this cruel to himself, treating himself so harshly and even dying several times in the process, his attitude towards his enemies was needless to say.

“Betraying your own comrades, you don't even possess the qualifications to be my dog. Scram!” Luo Qianqiu exclaimed coldly, causing Zero's unsightly countenance to turn pale, void of blood. He had chosen to betray Qin Wentian in order to get some Blood Ember Fruits from Franklin, but who knew that the spiritual fruits would all eventually end up in Qin Wentian's possession?

And now, he was even humiliated to such an extent by Luo Qianqiu.

Zero bowed as his face contorted, opting to leave silently.

“Young Master Luo, do you want me to arrange his death?” Franklin whispered at Luo Qianqiu’s side. Since Zero could betray Qin Wentian because of hatred, he could similarly cause trouble for them in the future. What was the use of leaving such a person alive?

“No need.” Luo Qianqiu calmly replied. He then turned and walked in the direction of the valley. He, Luo Qianqiu, was someone of extraordinary status; why would he be bothered about some little character like Zero? After all, he had his own sense of pride.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le returned back to the lake where they had washed themselves earlier. A few moments later, the silhouette of Little Rascal appeared. Little Rascal trotted over with a bag full of fruits in its mouth, stopping when it arrived at Qin Wentian’s side.

“Good fellow.” Qin Wentian opened the bag and saw ten Blood Ember Fruits secured within. Little Rascal transformed back to its small size as Qin Wentian rubbed its head, letting out small barks of contentment and wagging its tail in enjoyment.

“Little Rascal, you consumed so many Blood Ember Fruits to no effect. Don’t you find that you’ve wasted heavenly treasures?” Fan Le exclaimed as he moved to pat Little Rascal on its head. Arching its back, Little Rascal sprang away and stared at Fan Le with disdain in its gaze causing Fan Le to roll his eyes.

“To think that this fellow had a keen nose for treasure.” Qin Wentian’s face was full of smiles. Soon after they split their fruits, they swiftly left the area. Since Zero knew of this place, it would be better for them to find another safer place to consume the Blood Ember Fruits and attempt their breakthroughs to the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation before doing anything else.

It had been quite some time since both of them had stepped into the 2nd level of Arterial Circulation and tempered themselves within the Dark Forest. Almost salivating, Fan Le wolfed down three Blood Ember Fruits one after another as he successfully broke through to the 3rd level. His actions caused Qin Wentian to be speechless. Wasn’t what he doing equivalent to what he just told Little Rascal? Wasting heavenly treasures.....

And as for Qin Wentian, after he consumed two of the spiritual fruits, he continued to temper himself in the Dark Forest, not daring to neglect his cultivation. And finally, ten days later, he, too, successfully broke through to the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation, opening up his 3rd circular arterial pathway. The Astral Energy flow in his body was much smoother now compared to before, and it was as if his entire being underwent a transformation. The feeling of this type of change...extremely miraculous!

As for the remaining three Blood Ember Fruits, Qin Wentian was not in a rush to consume them. This type of spiritual fruits could be considered extremely precious and was very tough to find. If it wasn’t for Little Rascal leading the way, they would not have spotted the hidden mountain valley. It would be better for him to store the Blood Ember Fruits for the future, only ingesting them during the times when he attempted breakthroughs.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were not in a rush to leave the Dark Forest. Now, after their breakthroughs, hunting of 4th level demonic beasts became much easier. The cores of flying-type demonic beasts belonged to Qin Wentian, while cores of land-type beasts belonged to Fan Le.

In the blink of an eye, another month passed. The leaves of the trees in the Dark Forest turned into a myraid of colors as they drifted along with the wind and fell down to the earth, signifying the coming of Autumn.

Currently, in the Dark Forest, the silhouettes of two youth and a snowy puppy could often be seen. They traverse in all four directions, hunting demonic beasts left and right. Very quickly, the demonic beasts of the nearby regions recognised them and treated them as monsters, fleeing away, not even attempting to fight when they encountered the three hunters.

Qin Wentian's Garuda Movement Technique had already reached the peak of the Skillful Level. The faint Garuda's mark got clearer as it glimmered faintly with light; even the aura exuded by Qin Wentian underwent a slight change. Perhaps it was because he absorbed the demonic essence from numerous cores, but his whole person now seemed to exude a very faint demonic presence, undergoing a qualitative change. Despite of his dirt-stained body and travel-worn clothes, all of this couldn't mask the light of vitality in his eyes. After all these months tempering themselves in the Dark Forest, Qin Wentian and Fan Le also grew slightly taller.

“Fatty, your figure is getting more masculine.” At this moment,

Qin Wentian slashed apart the head of a demonic beast with his dagger, retrieving the demonic core within, as he smiled to Fan Le.

Fan Le had gotten slimmer and more masculine after their constant fights with the demonic beasts throughout this period of time.

“Well, I’m a man that was born to woo goddesses, of course I have to look handsome enough.” Fan Le grinned, “Boss, do you still have any Blood Ember Fruits left? Can you give some to me?”

“You bastard, you gorged yourself until you finished your share, and you still want me to split my portion with you? Keep on dreaming.” Qin Wentian snorted. This Fatty, in a bid to break through to the 4th level of Arterial Circulation, had consumed his remaining stash of two Blood Ember Fruits in one go upon reaching the 3rd level. However, he failed to break through, and instead his cultivation base rose to the peak of the 3rd level.

“Come on, we are brothers.” Fan Le grumbled, but as they decided to leave the place, the sound of someone calling out for help could be heard. The bodies of Qin Wentian and Fan Le flickered, and some moments later, they saw a group of people chasing after a sorry-looking figure.

“Zero?” An interesting expression appeared on Fatty’s face. He cast his gaze upon the person who was being chased after.

Noticing Qin Wentian and Fan Le, Zero halted his steps as a ray of hope appeared in his eyes. He shouted, “Qin Wentian, Fan Le,

save me! They want to kill me!”

The pursuers caught up and surrounded Zero. One of them exclaimed, “Friend, during our battles with some demonic beasts, this despicable fellow actually stole the demonic cores that we left at the side. Please don’t interfere in our business.”

“They are lying, they took the demonic cores from cultivators they killed!” Zero’s countenance underwent a drastic change as he stared pitifully at Qin Wentian and Fan Le. They were his last hope of survival.

“People like you should count yourselves lucky that I didn’t personally kill you myself.” Fan Le coldly replied. Back when Zero betrayed them by bringing a group of people to deal with them, did he even think of their feelings even once?

Zero’s expression froze. Looking towards Qin Wentian, he earnestly begged, “Qin Wentian, we were once comrades. Please save me!”

“My friendship is only given once. Once you abuse the trust between us, it is gone forever.” Qin Wentian, like Fan Le, coldly replied before turning his back as he prepared to leave.

“They have the Blood Ember Fruits on their bodies.” Zero frantically shrieked as he pointed to Qin Wentian and Fan Le. “Not only one, they have over ten of the fruits with them.”

Qin Wentian and Fan Le halted their steps, only to see the face of Zero contorted with hatred. Glaring angrily at them, Zero cursed. This was all their fault, landing him into such a situation today.

“Haha, wow so lively.” A voice drifted over from the distance as a number of silhouettes sprinted over. There was a total of six people lead by the one and only Logan.

“Qin Wentian, hand over the Blood Ember Fruits.” Logan’s gaze went cold. Meanwhile, the group of people who had been pursuing Zero turned their gazes over to Qin Wentian with greed visible in their eyes.

Qin Wentian remembered a saying he had heard long ago regarding the Dark Forest: Demonic beasts were not the most dangerous beings that one would face. Instead, the most dangerous thing was the human heart.

“Qin Wentian, Fan Le, prepare to go to hell.” Zero shouted hatefully.

Unexpectedly, Qin Wentian’s body instantly transformed into a blur of shadows. Zero’s pupils narrowed as he rapidly backpedaled, trying to retreat.

A ray of blood red light flashed, followed by a dagger slashing Zero’s throat. With both hands around his throat, the look in his eyes spoke of absolute terror as he stared at the looming Qin Wentian. He fell to his knees. Never had he thought that his life, a young flame burning in the void, would so easily be extinguished

in this manner.

In his sea of thoughts, many things flashed by. He was so young yet strong enough to qualify for the Emperor Star Academy. How proud of himself was he back then? Inviting Qin Wentian and Fan Le to hunt for demonic beasts and tempering their combat skills in the Dark Forest, this was his idea. How happy was he back then when they had agreed?

But all of this disappeared into thin air with the appearance of the Blood Ember Fruits. His path of life was already destined to end the moment he made his decision to betray Qin Wentian.

AGM 070 – Visitor From Snowcloud Country

The dagger in Qin Wentian's hand was glistening with blood. His facial expression revealed only an incomparable calmness that actually caused Logan to feel a sense of danger.

Logan released his Astral Souls while swinging his axe around, coating his Divine Weapon with the light radiated from his axe-type Astral Soul and imbuing it with additional strength and sharpness. When he previously fought against Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian had given him a huge amount of pressure, so in order to prevent the same from happening, Logan decided that it was better to err on the side of caution this time around.

His party members all released their Astral Souls, and they arranged themselves into a formation. In response, Fan Le sneaked away, increasing the distance between him and the formation as he too released his bow-type Astral Soul.

Unlike the students, however, Qin Wentian indifferently put away his dagger and withdrew a pair of glove. The light which radiated from the silver-colored glove was exceptionally blinding.

This was an item that Qin Wentian had forged for himself. He calmly equipped his gloves while still remaining tranquil and indifferent, like the calm before the storm.

“Be careful.” Logan intoned in a low voice to his party members, but when Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to Zero's pursuers, the pursuers became overwhelmed with a sense of extreme wariness.

The smile on Qin Wentian's face screamed of extreme danger, and there was even a faint trace of demonic energy from the aura he exuded.

Abruptly, several vines appeared, coiling themselves around Qin Wentian's body and violently pulling him through the air towards the cultivator with the tree-type Astral Soul.

Seeing that Qin Wentian was bound, Logan and the rest of his party members exploded forth with their killing intent, intending to dash forward. However in this instance, nine arrows sped through the air straight towards Logan and his party members.

Logan let out an angry roar and immediately chopped at the arrows. The amount of power he used was incomparably tyrannical, capable of splitting apart a mountain.

At the same moment, that tree-type Astral Soul Cultivator, smiled grimly at Qin Wentian, who was being pulled towards him. A cold glint of light flashed in his eyes, as he prepare himself to stab the edge of a wooden stake right into Qin Wentian's heart.

Unknowingly to the cultivator, Qin Wentian had purposely allowed himself to be pulled closer; he was silently thanking the vine-user for making it easier to make his next move. In mid air, the speed at which Qin Wentian was being pulled over surprisingly increased! Qin Wentian's body flickered, causing the pupils of the party members to narrow as he appeared in front of the vine-user.

“Roar.” A draconic roar rang out. The domineering Dragon

Subduing Fist destroyed the sharpened stake, followed by the materialization of a silvery draconic claw that lifted the vine-user up by his throat, leaving him with no strength to resist.

“3rd level of Arterial Circulation.” Logan’s face turned green as arrow after arrow was explosively fired over in his direction, making it helpless for him to help his party members.

After crushing the throat of the vine-user, Qin Wentian dashed towards the four other members of Logan’s party. Each step was filled with such force that the earth trembled in its wake. In his body, the Astral Anergy in all three of his completed circular arterial pathways were practically boiling and seething with power before flowing to his arms and explosively released through his palms. The force was further augmented by adding on the boosting effect granted to him by his pair of glove-type Divine Weapon.

In the air, numerous palm prints could be seen in superposition, like the roiling waves of the great ocean. All attacks mounted by Logan’s party members instantly disintegrated into nothingness as their faces revealed expressions of shock and terror.

“Rumble!” The terrifying palm imprints landed on the bodies of the four members of Logan’s party. The domineering energy within the palm strikes shattered their ribcage and pulverising their hearts, effectively killing all four within a single exchange of blows.

Fan Le had already ceased his barrage of arrows, but Logan’s heart was still shuddering from what he just witnessed. As he saw Qin Wentian dashing over in his direction, a look of abject terror

could be seen in his eyes.

“If I retreat now, I die.”

Howling with anger, Logan chopped down with his axe, as though he wanted to sunder the heavens and earth and destroy all of creation. Qin Wentian chose not to dodge. Instead, with the boosting effect of his divine gloves, he sent out another torrent of Revolving Sea Imprints that knocked the axe away from Logan’s hand. Soon after, his hand grabbed Logan’s throat and held on as he continued dashing forwards.

“Boom!” No longer under his own control, Logan’s body slammed against the trunk of a gigantic tree. His countenance turned a ghastly shade of white while his blood and Qi roiled about chaotically in his body.

“Spare me please.” Just as the sound of Logan’s voice begging for mercy broke the air, the silvery gloves already sliced his throat. His body slumped lifelessly onto the ground with his eyes bulging out their sockets, filled with absolute despair.

“Hu.....” The pursuers’ bodies tensed up as the smiles on their faces disappeared. They had never expected that this tranquil-looking youth in front of them would be so ruthless to such an extent and show no mercy at all.

“Let’s leave.” With a smile, Qin Wentian looked towards Fan Le, and the two departed together. Only then did the pursuers heave a sigh of relief.

“The next time we encounter him, we will turn our heads and walk away. He is not someone we can afford to antagonise.” One pursuer told his comrades. The rest nodded their heads. They had frequently trained themselves in the Dark Forest and were used to cold-blooded killing, but now that they saw how calm Qin Wentian was when he slaughtered Logan, they couldn’t help but to feel terrified.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le were currently walking leisurely in the Dark Forest. Fan Le kept stealing glances at Qin Wentian, a strange light flickering in his eyes.

“What are you look at? Are you jealous that I’m more handsome than you?” Qin Wentian grinned.

Fan Le shook his head as he commented, “Compared to the time I first met you, you’ve changed a lot.”

“You, at that time, always looked to be full of worries. Even though you were ruthless towards your enemies, it couldn’t be compared to the calmness and decisiveness you exhibited earlier.”

“People are always changing.” Qin Wentian laughed. “Are you not the same? We both changed for the better, although you still love talking nonsense with a straight face.”

Fan Le frowned and furrowed his brows, but he asked, “You are right, humans are constantly changing. In fact, in order to adapt to this world, changes must occur. But would there be a day where we

lose ourselves and will no longer to be able to find the original us after undergoing so many changes?”

“In front of my brothers, my heart still remains unchanged. I’m still the original me, no matter what happens.” Qin Wentian gazed straight at Fan Le with sincerity apparent in his tone. Upon hearing Qin Wentian’s words, Fan Le displayed a brilliant smile on his face as he nodded in agreement.

“Right, our brotherhood will never waver or change in this lifetime.” Fan Le cast his eyes far away. Looking at somewhere unknown in the horizon, he thought of the first time they met. The seeds of their friendship were sown on the day that Fatty decided to run alongside with Qin Wentian. Sometimes, bonds between men were just so simple and didn’t need explanations or reasons to exist.

The smell of autumn was thick in the air, as the myriad of falling leaves covered the ground, forming a pathway. On the path, two youth walked together side by side with a snowy puppy behind them. Smiles could be seen on their faces as they raised their heads and gazed out city outside of the Dark Forest.

“Hey, those kids from the academy actually survived the Dark Forest. How lucky!” A few risk-takers and adventurers grinned once they spotted Qin Wentian and Fan Le. Youngsters that were found tempering themselves in the Dark Forest would mostly be from the Emperor Star Academy.

“Yeah, our luck is not too bad.” Qin Wentian laughed as he replied to the burly man who made the statement earlier.

“Youngsters should steer clear of the Dark Forest. Handsome lad, I believe you have not tasted women yet am I right? Do you want elder sister to teach you a thing or two?” A seductive woman standing beside the burly man was wearing a set of bold, accentuating clothes. Her cleavage bounced with every word, drawing the attention of almost every male in the vicinity.

“Third Sister, behave yourself. He is just a kid! If you need a man, why don’t you look for me?” The burly man laughed uproariously as he fixed his gaze on the bouncing twin peaks of the provocative lady.

“Are you as handsome as the boy?” The lady replied in contempt. Sounds of their bickering could still be heard even after the group of adventurers and risk-takers stepped into the Dark Forest.

“Return safely!” Qin Wentian shouted, wishing them well. The burly man waved his hands as he shouted back in reply, “This old man me can’t die until I’ve tasted this little vixen.”

“What a bunch of interesting fellows.” Qin Wentian exclaimed as he walked with Fan Le towards the Royal Capital. Soon after, they stepped through the Eastern Heavenly Gate. Qin Wentian thought about it; seven months had passed ever since he joined the training expedition organised by the Coalition of the Nine Academies.

“Time passes swiftly indeed.” Qin Wentian sighed.

The autumn wind blew on his body with a hint of coldness. His features had gained a few more lines of determination from his slow maturation.

In the Chu Country, on a main pathway in the Royal Capital, a long line of people stood in formation. Within this formation of troops, a total of eight draconic horses pulled a single carriage. What caused people to be awed was that there were actually wings growing on the backs of the draconic horses.

These horses were a mutated breed of draconic horses, suitably named ‘Feathered Draconic Horses’. They were extremely valuable due to their flight, capable of traveling 10,000 miles in a single day.

That single carriage was actually pulled by eight Feathered Draconic Horses! This only served to show that the person sitting within hailed from an extraordinary background. In addition to the impressive horses, the carriage was surrounded by a defensive formation of troops. At the front of the horse carriage sat an old man with closed eyes, deep in meditation. However, the aura he exuded was so powerful that others couldn’t discern his true level of cultivation.

Stationed behind the troops were a bunch of several youths, all of who were filled with vitality as they contemplated the Royal Capital of the Chu Country.

On the main paths, several others in the crowd were whispering under their breaths.

“I heard that the person sitting in the carriage is one of the candidates for the wife position of the Snowcloud Country’s crown prince.”

“Those youths behind the troops should be the students of the various academies within the Snowcloud Country. I heard that the academy in the Royal Capital responsible for welcoming them is none other than the Royal Academy, and it seems to me that the students of the Snowcloud Country want to test themselves against students of the Royal Academy.”

Discussion was sparked everywhere, and Qin Wentian and Fan Le, upon arriving at this street, couldn’t help but to be curious when they heard the whispers racing through the crowd. The crown prince’s consort actually brought people to the Chu Country?

In the carriage pulled by Feathered Draconic Horses, a snow-white hand was extended to lift the curtain covering the carriage. A beautiful face was revealed, drawing gazes from everyone in the crowd.

What a beautiful woman! Although she was only 18 years of age, worry could be seen in the depths of her beautiful eyes, as though she was deeply troubled by something.

Sweeping his gaze over the carriage, Qin Wentian’s eyes widened. He immediately froze, then proceeded to tremble violently. Was he

dreaming?

AGM 071 – Luo Qianqiu

“Sister Yao.” Qin Wentian mumbled as he stared dumbstruck at Qin Yao’s beautiful gaze.

As if by instinct, Qin Yao’s gaze landed on Qin Wentian. Her heart lurched uncontrollably after noticing him, and an intense light flickered in her eyes. She wanted nothing more than to rush down to reunite with Qin Wentian.

The two of them locked their gazes. Qin Wentian was the first to recover, and he strode towards Qin Yao’s direction.

“No, I can’t meet him now. Wentian is currently held in high regard by the Emperor Star Academy. With his current position, I can’t meet him like this or else he’ll become embroiled in a web of rumors.” Seeing Qin Wentian making his way forward, Qin Yao couldn’t help but to feel her heart tremble with emotions. Soon after, she let down the curtains and commanded, “Faster.”

As the sound of her voice faded, the troops in the formation increased their speed. Qin Wentian had already arrived in front of the formation and was about to go to Qin Yao when suddenly, a silhouette atop of a horse blocked his way. “No one is allowed to get near the carriage.” The figure on the horse stated coldly.

Qin Wentian froze as he felt the aura emanating out from the figure on horseback. He knew that he would not be able to rush over.

“What’s happening? Sister Yao saw me as well, but why did she pretended not to know me?” Qin Wentian stood there in a daze. The figure on horseback, upon seeing that there was no other reaction from Qin Wentian, turned and departed.

Very quickly, the formation of troops left the area, leaving behind Qin Wentian, who was still standing on his original spot, lost in his thoughts.

“You know the person sitting in the carriage?” Fan Le asked as he came over. Qin Wentian nodded his head in response.

“But I heard that the person sitting inside is one of the candidates to be the chosen as the crown prince’s wife, are you sure you did not make a mistake?” Fan Le murmured.

“Snowcloud Country, I can’t be wrong. Sister Qin Yao stated that they would be going to cultivate at Snowcloud Country at the start of the year. What on earth happened within these seven to eight months?” Qin Wentian’s mind was in chaos. The candidate for the crown prince’s wife? What was going on?

“Let’s go.” With a heart full of bewilderment, Qin Wentian left and walked towards the direction of the Emperor Star Academy. For the matter of Qin Yao, he decided to investigate further using other sources, he must know for sure what exactly happened to Qin Yao.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le, along with Little Rascal, arrived at the academy grounds. To their surprise, the eyes of the students

glancing at them contained something unreadable in their gazes, something strange.. something like sympathy.

“Qin Wentian has returned.”

“That fellow disappeared for two months. They say that he went to temper himself in the Dark Forest. Now that he finally returned, I’m afraid that things aren’t looking so good for him.”

Many people were whispering to themselves. The news regarding Qin Wentian’s return soon spread like wildfire all over the academy.

As Qin Wentian and Fan Le returned to their dorms, they discovered many people waiting in the area outside. Sheena was there as well.

“Sheena, why are you here?” Qin Wentian asked with bewilderment in his tone.

“What happened? How did you guys managed to antagonise Luo Qianqiu?” Sheena frantically inquired, her voice filled with concern. Qin Wentian locked gazes with Fan Le. Both of their faces was filled with puzzlement. Who the hell was Luo Qianqiu? Did they know him?

“About 20 days ago, Luo Qianqiu returned back to the academy and ordered some of his men to send word, telling you to pay him a visit once you’re back.” Sheena continued.

“Luo Qianqiu, could he be the Young Master Luo that Logan spoke of?” Qin Wentian mumbled. On the day when they fought over the Blood Ember Fruits, Zero appeared with Franklin, which eventually led to Logan agreeing to give all the fruits to a Young Master Luo.

“That sounds about right. The person they were speaking of should’ve been Luo Qianqiu. You guys somehow created a big mess for yourselves now.” Sheena sighed as she continued, “Luo Qianqiu is a legendary figure from our academy, blessed with extraordinary talent. Previously, when he first joined, the competition between Elders fighting for him was extremely intense. With his cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, not many people would dare to antagonise him. Even the aristocratic members of the Knight’s Association would have to show him some respect.”

“Since I’ve already offended those members of the Knight’s Association, I wouldn’t mind offending one more Luo Qianqiu as well.” Qin Wentian’s tone of voice was calm and tranquil. This Luo Qianqiu really thought of himself as the axis the world revolved around. Such pride, even daring to demand the Blood Ember Fruits though he did nothing to deserve them.

Now, despite the fact that they were back at the Academy, it seemed that Luo Qianqiu still had no intentions on giving up the Blood Ember Fruits

“No, you don’t understand. Luo Qianqiu is totally different from those of the Knight’s Association. When doing things, members of

the Knight's Association would still have to take many things into consideration, but it's different for Luo Qianqiu. In the academy, he always does what he wants. By now, he practically did everything, breaking every rule with the exception of the killing of a fellow student. He even once crippled the cultivation of several students but the academy did nothing to stop him. Not only that, his background, the power behind him, is an extremely terrifying entity." Sheena frantically explained, worried that Qin Wentian wouldn't be able to see any sense.

"It's good that you understand now." A cold voice drifted over. Qin Wentian and the rest turned their heads over, only to see the person who Zero betrayed them to – Franklin.

"You guys actually dared to steal Young Master Luo's belongings? Now that you are back, go present yourselves to him with the fruits and humbly beg for an apology. This way, the Asura Faction may still let you off with a light sentence."

Franklin coldly snorted at Qin Wentian and Fan Le. On that dreadful day, these two fellows and that dog had stolen the entire hoard of Blood Ember Fruits.

"We stole?" Qin Wentian and Fan Le froze.

"The treasures hidden in the Dark Forest belong to those who have the luck to find them, and yet you say that we stole the fruits from him? That time, Luo Qianqiu wasn't even there when we fought the demonic pythons guarding the fruits." Qin Wentian calmly retorted. Franklin's words were too ridiculous.

“Since Logan had wanted to gift the Blood Ember Fruits to Young Master Luo, this meant that all the fruits you acquired that day were already his. How dare you steal them!?”

Franklin couldn't help but feel astonishment when he heard Qin Wentian contradicting him, “Don't think that because the academy holds you in high regards, you have the qualifications to go against Young Master Luo's wishes. Even for people of Murong Feng's standards, Young Master Luo has the power to easily squashed him to death with a single finger.”

After saying this, Franklin flicked his sleeves as he turned and departed, “If you don't appear in front of Young Master Luo with your apology, you better be prepared for the consequences. But I can warn you right now, Young Master Luo's anger is something that even you wouldn't be able to handle.”

A look of extreme coldness radiated from the eyes of Qin Wentian as he gazed at the back view of the departing Franklin.

“Even a lackey dares to be so arrogant, what a marvel!” Fan Le exclaimed.

“Hmm, even Teacher Mustang and Senior Sister Luo Huan came.” At this moment, Qin Wentian saw two silhouettes walking over from the distance. They were none other than Mustang and Luo Huan.

“Little Junior Brother, you really have a talent for creating

trouble.” Luo Huan laughed as she looked at Qin Wentian, causing him to smile bitterly in response.

It seemed like this Luo Qianqiu truly had an extraordinary background. If not, there was no way that Mustang and Luo Huan would appear here today.

“I didn’t offend him.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders as he proceeded to explained what happened to the both of them.

“Blood Ember Fruits, no wonder.” After hearing Qin Wentian’s explanation, Luo Huan had already understood. Obviously, Luo Qianqiu wanted to get his hands on the precious Blood Ember Fruits to aid him in his breakthrough.

“Wentian.”

At this moment, Mustang shifted his gaze onto Qin Wentian and sighed, “From what you said, your actions were not wrong. In fact, they were excellent and would probably be what I would have chosen to do if I were in that situation. However, in this world, there is no absolute right or absolute wrong. Everything depends on strength. I can only say that your luck is not good to have met Luo Qianqiu right after you found the Blood Ember Fruits.”

“Luo Qianqiu.” Qin Wentian mumbled. Earlier when he had purposely offended Orchon, Mustang did not step in to warn him off the path of his action. But, for Luo Qianqiu, he did so now, which supported the assertion that Luo Qianqiu’s status and background was truly monstrous.

“Wentian, after you left Sky Harmony City, you should have known that even though the world outside is fanciful, it’s also filled with danger. Experts are as common as the floating clouds, and so are the disciples of those with great authority. The number of talented youths under the sky is boundless. Your talent is extraordinary, but if you want to mature, it is not that simple. Who knows how many monstrous geniuses have fallen before reaching the peak of their potential. Do you understand what I’m trying to say?”

Mustang regarded Qin Wentian, as he continued, “This place is merely an academy, but in the future, when you leave here, you will realise that sometimes, the art of tolerance is a great virtue.”

“Teacher, I understand your kind intentions. Please tell me what you want to directly.” Qin Wentian smiled bitterly. Naturally, he understood the intent behind Mustang’s words.

Mustang paused, but he slowly nodded his head, “Go look for Luo Qianqiu and apologise. If there are people who want to kill you within the academy, Luo Qianqiu, is undoubtedly, one of them now.”

Qin Wentian’s pupils narrowed as he asked, “What background does he have?”

“You do not need to know of this now.” Mustang replied heavily, “Luo Huan will accompany you. If there are still any Blood Ember Fruits remaining, it would be good if you give them to him.”

Qin Wentian irresolutely muttered to himself. He knew that Mustang's urgings were only out of concern for him. Eventually, he smiled and replied, "I will look for him."

"Since that's the case, if there's anything else, you can chat with your Senior Sister Luo Huan. I will take my leave first." Mustang left shortly after. Luo Hua, rubbed the head of Qin Wentian as she smiled, "Little Junior Brother, you've grown and are even more handsome-looking now."

Rolling his eyes, Qin Wentian laughed bitterly, "Senior Sister, I have something that I need your help with."

"What's the matter?" Luo Huan curiously inquired.

"Earlier in the Royal Capital, I met my sister Qin Yao. However, she came here together with people from the Snowcloud Country. I heard that..... she was one of the candidates for the crown prince's wife. Could Senior Sister help me to investigate this matter?"

"Fine, leave this to me. Tomorrow, I will look for you and we will go to see Luo Qianqiu together, alright?"

"Alright." Qin Wentian nodded his head.

After this, Luo Huan and Sheena both left, leaving behind Qin Wentian and Fan Le. Fan Le glanced at Qin Wentian and asked,

“Are you really going?”

“Didn’t you see how Teacher Mustang came personally? This matter is of extreme importance.” Qin Wentian exclaimed as he walked into his dorm with Fan Le following close behind. Fan Le added with some depression, “Damn, the next time we do things, we must be ruthless enough and ensure that we eliminate all possible roots of trouble.”

Qin Wentian understood Fan Le’s words. If they had been strong enough to completely annihilate Franklin, Logan, and his party members, they wouldn’t have to face such a situation today.

“How about the Blood Ember Fruits? Are you really going to give them up?” Fan Le curiously looked at Qin Wentian. He knew that although Qin Wentian appeared nonchalant on the surface, he had his own pride in his heart. Going forth to apologise because of Luo’s greed and even giving up the Blood Ember Fruits to pacify him? Impossible!

Qin Wentian withdrew the remaining Blood Ember Fruits, threw them into his mouth, and devoured them all in one go. His actions caused Fan Le to freeze before momentarily bursting out with laughter. This fellow, how ruthless!

After he devoured the fruits, a sharp glint of cold light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes. He had no more remaining fruits to give to Luo Qianqiu.

In this world, strength was absolute.

Without strength, what enabled you to have pride? Without strength, what would you use to protect your dignity? Without strength, you can't even protect yourself, not to mention protecting your family and friends.

AGM 072 – Fine Line Between Life And Death

Qin Wentian had already devoured the remaining Blood Ember Fruits. Since Mustang wanted him to pay a visit to Luo Qianqiu, he would acquiesce. But wanting him to hand over the Blood Ember Fruits that would enable him to raise his own strength? Not a chance.

If his level of strength was stronger than Luo Qianqiu's, it would not be Qin Wentian who needed to pay a visit.

Qin Wentian could feel his body burning from the three Blood Ember Fruits that he just ingested. His countenance turned red, as the blood in his body surged and seethed. Soon after, a terrifying energy inundated his energy channels and arterial pathways, seeping into his entire body.

Qin Wentian gritted his teeth. The frenzied Divine Energy and Astral Energy in his body, augmented by the effects of the Blood Ember Fruits, were gushing rampantly around his arterial pathways. Rumbling sounds were relentlessly emitted from Qin Wentian's body, akin to the bluster of the roiling ocean waves. Fan Le took off at top speed and slammed the door close, silently cursing that Qin Wentian was a madman.

The popping sounds rang out continuously, as the previous stream of energy within his body transformed into an ocean. For almost half a day, the terrifying Divine Energy never ceased gushing frenziedly about until his 4th circular arterial path was fully formed. Boundless energy surged through the newly-formed circular arterial pathway, flooding every cell of his body.

“4th level of Arterial Circulation?” Fan Le flipped his body on his bed as he felt the aura emanating from Qin Wentian. The light in his eyes flickered when he realised that the effects of the Blood Ember Fruits had not ended.

“Monster.” Fan Le cursed silently in a low voice before deciding to go back to sleep. And when he finally woke up, he discovered that Qin Wentian had already fallen asleep. The Astral Light landed upon Qin Wentian’s body, flowing through the window. This monster was once again cultivating in his sleep, fully making use of the excess essence that remained behind after his broke through from ingesting the Blood Ember Fruits.

Having just broken through to the 4th level, the energy that Qin Wentian would be able to store in his body once again increased. Using the techniques listed in the Spirit Refinement Method, he decided to condensed more of his Astral Energy into Divine Energy. This time around, he could feel that the rate of conversion was faster when compared to before.

After Qin Wentian awoke, he did not waste time. He continued to immerse himself in his cultivation. Feeling the increased amount of energy in his body, his mood was a lot better.

Qin Wentian’s immediate goal was to increase his strength as soon as possible. No matter how strong he was, as of now, it was still not enough.

When Luo Huan arrived, Qin Wentian was still immersed in his

cultivation practice. “Oi!” Fan Le shouted and woke up Qin Wentian, who saw Luo Huan smiling at him. “Little Junior Brother, you are so hardworking.”

“Senior Sister, don’t joke about me. My level of strength is still so weak. If I don’t work hard and get stronger, I’m afraid if I died, I won’t even have the chance to regret it.” Qin Wentian smiled bitterly.

“Your level of cultivation isn’t bad at all. After all, since the time you embarked on the path of cultivation, it hasn’t even been a year.” Luo Huan blinked her beautiful eyelashes as she laughed, “I’ve already investigated the matter you requested of me. Qin Yao is indeed one of the candidates to be chosen to marry the crown prince of Snowcloud Country. However, according to my sources, there isn’t much hope for her to be the crown prince’s main wife. I’m afraid she would only be a concubine.”

Qin Wentian’s countenance froze. A concubine? As a descendent of Chu Country’s Wu King, it was indeed difficult for Qin Yao to be the main wife of the crown prince of Snowcloud Country.

“I must personally ask Sister Yao whether this was out of her own will or someone forced her to it.” Qin Wentian drew in a huge breath.

“Why is she here at Chu Country?” Qin Wentian continued asking.

“She and several youths from Snowcloud Martial Palace are here

to exchange pointers with the Royal Academy's students. But according to my deductions, your sister Qin Yao is probably here for another purpose. Her true purpose should be to save Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, using the Snowcloud Country's name to pressure the Chu Country."

Qin Wentian nodded his head. Qin Yao would definitely want to rescue Grandpa Qin as well as Father.

"And additionally, I have one more piece of bad news for you." Luo Huan continued, "Orchon's cultivation base has broken through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, so he's a lot stronger than before."

"Understood." Qin Wentian nodded his head as he sighed silently in his heart. Everyone was cultivating so assiduously. If he didn't work harder than them, he would soon be left behind while the others soared ahead.

"Okay, let's go and meet Luo Qianqiu now."

"Right." Qin Wentian nodded his head. He left with Luo Huan and Fan Le.

On the Emperor Star Academy's arena, there were currently two figures sparring on the stage with each other. Although they were merely sparing, the moves and techniques they executed were extremely vicious. Each strike could potentially end a life. Seeing the ferociousness of each figure, the spectators of the match were all in awe.

“This time, Luo Qianqiu’s power is much stronger compared to before he went into the Dark Forest. Even Southern-Skies wasn’t able to block his attacks.”

“Right. It’s almost a guarantee that Young Master Luo will be a true leader of our Asura Faction.”

Several people in the crowd smiled and nodded their heads as they gazed at the figures on the arena. Luo Qianqiu was a monster of his generation. The speed of his growth was too frightening! This was only the start of his second year at the academy, but to think that his prowess had already reached such a stage.

On the arena, a voice filled with immense strength resounded as the two figures on the arena stepped back. Southern-Skies laughed, “Qianqiu, your strength increased again. I’m afraid that soon, even I will no longer be an opponent for you.”

Wearing a blue robe, Luo Qianqiu looked clean and unruffled. With a handsome face and hair that fluttered behind him from the billowing wind, he was given the aura of an idol revered by many.

He was Luo Qianqiu, the student ranked number one out of the previous batch of new students. Now, his cultivation base was already at the peak of the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. Not only that, his combat ability was extremely terrifying, enabling him to be able to defeat opponents with higher cultivation bases.

Luo Qianqiu didn’t deny the words of Southern-Skies. Truth to

be told, if the two of them were to fight to the death right now, he didn't think that he would lose.

“Young Master Luo.” At this moment, Franklin called out from underneath the arena. He spotted the silhouettes of three figures approaching. They were none other than Luo Huan, Qin Wentian, and Fan Le.

“The two youths beside Luo Huan are Qin Wentian and Fan Le, respectively. The theft of the Blood Ember Fruits was orchestrated precisely by them.” Franklin exclaimed. Luo Qianqiu's gaze slowly drifted over towards Luo Huan and the the pair. As his sight landed upon Qin Wentian, Luo Qianqiu found himself contemplating him. Was this the number one among the new batch of students?

Qin Wentian and the rest halted their steps near the arena. The figure standing atop of the arena had an extraordinary air to him, capable of attracting much attention.

Although Orchon was strong, if one were to compared Orchon and Luo Qianqiu, Orchon would merely be a summer breeze in the face of a cyclone when it came down to the presence they exuded.

Luo Qianqiu calmly stood there as he cast his gaze downwards at Qin Wentian, “Was it you who snatched my Blood Ember Fruits?”

“Yours?” Qin Wentian and Fan Le silently shook their heads, but they knew that in such a situation, if Luo Qianqiu said that the fruits were his, they were his.

“That day, we did not know that Senior Brother Luo was interested in the Blood Ember Fruits. I hope Senior Brother Luo wouldn’t blame us.”

“Cut the crap. Where are the Blood Ember Fruits now? Give them to me.” Luo Qianqiu stood on the arena, his voice emotionless, as he calmly replied.

The crowd silently witnessed the exchange between Qin Wentian and Luo Qianqiu. Although Qin Wentian was also a legendary figure in the Emperor Star Academy, the current him was still quite a distance away from Luo Qianqiu.

Expressions of interests appeared upon the faces of those from the Asura Faction. This fellow even dared to snatch the Blood Ember Fruits from Luo Qianqiu. He was certainly no coward.

“All the Blood Ember Fruits have already been consumed by me. I seek Senior Brother Luo’s forgiveness.” Qin Wentian replied politely. The expressions of interests deepened on the Asura members’ faces. Since the Blood Ember Fruits were gone, Qin Wentian’s gesture of coming here had no meaning to it anymore.

Luo Qianqiu lifted his foot and took a step forwards, walking down the arena, “You even dare to swallow that which belonged to me?”

As the sound of his voice faded, a immense surge of terrifying pressure, sparkling with arcs of lightning, gushed forth towards

Qin Wentian.

“Boom!” Qin Wentian steadied himself as he looked at Luo Qianqiu. Since Teacher Mustang and Luo Huan wanted him to pay a visit to Luo Qianqiu, he had done so. But as for the Blood Ember Fruits, he had already consumed all of them yesterday, with no intentions of giving any to Luo Qianqiu. No matter how Luo Qianqiu wanted to deal with him, Qin Wentian was ready.

Amazement flickered in Luo Huan’s eyes, but she could only bitterly smile at Qin Wentian. This fellow actually consumed all the Blood Ember Fruits on his person.

“Boom!” Taking another step forwards, the aura Luo Qianqiu was releasing thickened. Its intensity was akin to the force of a raging wind combined with a tidal wave, gushing forth towards Qin Wentian. The might of the arcs of lightning embedded within also grew increasingly stronger.

The spectators were all silently exclaiming at how tyrannical Luo Qianqiu was in their hearts. This Qin Wentian was extremely unfortunate. However, no one sympathised with him. After all, this was a strength-oriented world.

“Boom.” This was Luo Qianqiu’s third step. The pressure emitted by this step was immense. Luo Qianqiu suddenly arrived in front of Qin Wentian, unleashing a fist shrouded by a violent and domineering lightning energy that wanted to extinguish everything in its path. Qin Wentian felt his body go numb as the pressure he was withstanding intensified to its limit.

Surprisingly, Qin Wentian's countenance still remained incomparably calm. Taking a step backwards, he gathered the entirety of energy within his body before unleashing a Revolving Sea Imprint, striking against Luo Qianqiu's fist-lights. A thunderous sound reverberated from the collision of the two sources of energies, and almost immediately, the unfathomably domineering fist-lights extinguished the palm imprint. The remnants of terrifying energies blasted against Qin Wentian's body, causing him to involuntarily shudder before he violently retreated many steps and spit out a mouthful of fresh blood.

Luo Huan's beautiful eyes flickered, but she didn't step in to aid Qin Wentian. Some things, Qin Wentian would need to deal with them himself.

"Brutal." The gazes of spectators landed on Luo Qianqiu's figure, only to see him advancing forwards with the force of a raging wind as unbridled killing intent surged wildly.

Qin Wentian raised his head. An icy hint of killing intent could be seen in his calm eye. The killing intent in his eyes grew increasingly denser as Luo Qianqiu approached.

"Stay your hand." At this moment, a loud sound echoed out through the empty air. A figure descended from the skies, causing Luo Qianqiu to stop his fist, merely an inch away from Qin Wentian's face, in the middle of his attack. However, the terrifying shockwave of Luo Qianqiu's fist continued to blast Qin Wentian's face. His hair billowed and fluttered relentlessly behind him from the force of that attack.

Luo Qianqiu didn't pay any attention to Qin Wentian. Instead, he raised his head and turned his gaze upon the figure clad in white.

“Lin Hua.” Luo Qianqiu exclaimed.

“How about considering it a favor for me?” Lin Hua spoke as Luo Qianqiu cast a sidelong glance at Qin Wentian. Even now, Luo Qianqiu's features remained unperturbed. Perhaps he had never even once regarded Qin Wentian as his enemy but rather an ant that could be trampled easily.

“Fine. Since the leader of the Greencloud Association personally asked this of me, I can forget about this.” Luo Qianqiu turned his body and departed. The members of the Asura Faction were all murmuring in confusion. To think that the leader of Greencloud Association, Lin Hua, would personally speak out for Qin Wentian. Initially, they thought that at the most crucial moment, the one who would appear to stop the fight would instead be an Elder of the academy.

The members of Asura Faction left with after the match's conclusion. Their eyes held a hint of reverence as they fixed their eyes on Luo Qianqiu's back. The demon of the Emperor Star Academy, who hadn't heard of him by now?

In comparison, the current Qin Wentian was still too weak, their levels too far apart. Today, Qin Wentian somehow managed to survive due to luck.

Qin Wentian remained standing there with his right hand hidden within the folds of his sleeves.

Concealed in his sleeves, his hand was clutching tightly onto a golden-colored short sword. This short sword was none other than the 3rd-level Divine Weapon that Ren Qianxing had given to him, the Golden Sword!

Today, did Qin Wentian truly survive due to luck?

If Lin Hua hadn't appeared, the one who would have died would most assuredly not have been Qin Wentian.

AGM 073 – Cultivating Assiduously

Qin Wentian's countenance remained placid. He knew that to Luo Qianqiu, he was merely regarded as an insect, easily extinguishable.

Luo Qianqiu only wanted the Blood Ember Fruits. In his eyes, the fruits were already his. As for Qin Wentian, it didn't matter whether he lived or died. Killing or not killing Qin Wentian no longer served any purpose.

As Qin Wentian secretly concealed the Golden sword in his sleeves, the faint traces of a smile could be seen upon his visage. Previously, Qin Wentian didn't bother to care whether Luo Qianqiu was truly a monstrous talent of the Emperor Star Academy. But now, he did.

The humiliation that he suffered today, in time, he swore he would repay it ten-fold.

“Junior Brother.” Luo Huan shouted. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over to her. He was smiling at Luo Huan, as though he had already forgotten about the things that occurred earlier. He knew that even if he were preoccupied with the events earlier, nothing would come out of it unless he eroded Luo Qianqiu's base of power.

“Many thanks to Senior for your help.” Qin Wentian respectfully thanked Lin Hua, who was standing in the air.

If Lin Hua hadn't appeared, he would have definitely killed Luo

Qianqiu. Regardless of whoever was his opponent, he would never show mercy to those who wanted to kill him.

However, if he truly killed Luo Qianqiu, troubles of great magnitude would be sure to follow. Lin Hua's appearance prevented that from occurring, which was why Qin Wentian thanked him. In any case, what Qin Wentian needed to do now was to raise his level of cultivation as soon as possible.

"There's no need to stand on ceremony with me. Make sure to work hard." Lin Hua smiled as he nodded his head at Qin Wentian before soaring through the air and leaving.

"Senior Sister, could I request your help regarding another matter?" Qin Wentian looked to Luo Huan and politely stated.

"Between us, there's no need for you to be so courteous." Luo Huan linked her arms with Qin Wentian's.

"I wish to meet with my Sister Qin Yao, does Senior Sister have any way to arrange this?" Qin Wentian inquired.

"Your sister is currently in the Royal Academy, but I will see what I can do. I'll update you once I have any news." Hints of contemplation could be seen in Luo Huan's eyes as she pondered over the problem. After all, she did have some connections in the Royal Academy.

"Thank you, I will have to trouble Senior Sister then." Qin

Wentian smiled.

“Right, just leave all this to me. You should focus on increasing your strength as rapidly as possible.”

“Understood.” The corners of Qin Wentian’s mouth lifted into a smile. Embedded within that smile were traces of frivolousness and anticipation. Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, the Knight’s Association... With so many ‘companions’ waiting for him, how could he not be motivated?

He, Qin Wentian, was most willing to accept all and any challenges.

All of this, factored together, would be the reason pushing Qin Wentian to relentlessly seek after strength.

After returning back to their dorms, Qin Wentian used a few days’ worth of time to stabilise his cultivation base. The lingering effects from the consumption of the three Blood Ember Fruits still remained. Qin Wentian closed his eyes, and resume his cultivation, wanting to fully utilise all the beneficial effects obtained from the Blood Ember Fruits.

In his free time, he would visit the Divine Weapon Pavilion, forge some Divine Weapons and retrieve his Yuan Meteor Stones from Francis to aid him in his cultivation. After all, to train in the Spirit Refinement Method, one would require astronomical amounts of Yuan Meteor Stones.

Similarly, Fan Le behaved as if he were possessed. These few days, other than assiduously cultivating, he would also go to the Heavenly Star Pavilion as well as the Astral River Hall.

Dreamscape of the Dreamsky Forest, in the City of Illusions.

In a vast open space, two people were currently battling. One of them were wearing the long robes of the Knight's Association, while the other was clad in a simple, unadorned white robe. However, the face of the latter was concealed behind a fiery-red, kirin mask, that gave off a baleful and domineering aura.

“Ka cha.” A crisp sound rang out as the one wearing the robes from the Knight's Association had one of his arms broken. The pain was so excruciating that rivulets of cold sweat involuntarily ran down his forehead.

Despite this, the one in the white robe had no intentions of easily sparing his opponents. His arms flickered, causing the manifestation of a dragon claw that landed upon the other arm of his opponent, breaking it forcefully within a split second.

“Who are you, and where are you from?” The member of the Knight's Association roared as he was filled with an ambivalence of rage and terror. He was from the prominent Knight's Association of the Emperor Star Academy! How dare this person torture him like this!?

“Ka cha.....” Two echos of that same crisp sound rang out continually, as both of the legs belonging to the member of the Knight’s Association were broken. He fell helplessly onto the ground. The body of the white robed man flickered as he disappeared from sight.

Some moments later, the figure of another member from the Knight’s Association appeared. Seeing his comrade lying helplessly on the ground, tortured by the pain of his broken limbs, a cold light radiated from his eyes as he asked, “Who did this?”

This was purely torture, a cruel punishment. Only those in the Dark Forest who harboured deep grudges of hatred would do this.

“I have no idea, he was wearing a mask.” The body of that person shuddered involuntarily as pain of his broken limbs coursed through him. “Kill me first.”

“Right.” The other member heaved a spear and nodded. He swiftly ended his comrade’s misery.

Qin Wentian was currently sprinting through the City of Illusions, his movements akin to a Garuda in flight, incomparably graceful. His face was concealed behind a mask.

In the Dreamsky Forest’s dreamscape, with his features concealed, as long as he met a member from the Knight’s Association that was within his capabilities to handle, he would swiftly mete out brutal punishment.

Qin Wentian would never forget that day when the body of his good brother Fan Le was pierced by countless Astral Spears. This 'brutal revenge' of his was just the beginning.

The sprinting Qin Wentian halted his steps when he arrived at a circular stone platform. He then stated, "How long do you plan on following me? Why don't you show yourself?"

In the shadows of a nearby building, an exquisite figure with clearly defined contours appeared. It was actually a woman! However, her face couldn't be seen as well, because like Qin Wentian, her features were concealed behind a mask.

"I've seen the way you fight. Your Dragon Subduing Fist and your claws attacks are pretty powerful." The girl spoke with a bright and crisp voice as she walked towards Qin Wentian.

"And what about it?" Qin Wentian calmly replied.

"I wish to test myself against you, to see how fast you truly are." As the sound of her voice faded, her body exploded into motion. She dashed towards Qin Wentian, unleashing palm strikes filled with tyrannical gale force that were capable of tearing apart the void.

Qin Wentian continuously stepped on the ground, his movements filled with poise and grace, as his whole body flickered, transforming into shadows.

“Pfft.” The girl coldly snorted. She flipped her palm, mimicking the slash of a sabre, and slashed across the entire space. Her speed was extremely swift as well; both of them possessed extraordinary movement techniques.

As the battle continued, astonishment filled her heart. Each and every one of her palm strikes would miss their target by a slight amount. Every time, it look as though her attacks would succeed, Qin Wentian would dodge it just barely, always at the last moment of danger. His body movement techniques had already reached a pinnacle of sorts.

Abruptly, an Astral Soul was released, filling the entire space with a storm of gale winds. With a light shout, the strength of the girl’s palm strikes were further augmented by the windforce as it exploded forth towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian’s pupils narrowed. He could feel that the surrounding space about him was locked by a strange force, so there was no way for him to dodge this incoming strike. Without a choice, he unleash a strike of his own, as draconic roars filled the skies. Instantly, following the strikes’ collision, Qin Wentian borrowed the force from the attacks to retreat. Soaring backwards in controlled momentum, he moved with an incomparable grace.

“What’s the use of dodging?” That girl coldly exclaimed. Executing her movement techniques as well, she explode forth with the force of a raging hurricane, wanting to draw Qin Wentian together inside the storm of gale winds. Instantly, she appeared by the side of Qin Wentian, as she struck out with her palms strikes that were augmented by the force of the gale winds.

Qin Wentian's reflexes were lightning-fast, and his body transformed into shadows, executing the Garuda Movement Technique to its limit to dodge the palm strikes at the last possible moment. His fist also exploded forth, aiming directly for the face of the girl. Did the girl really think that he had no strength to attack?

Her eyes widened in shock as she saw the savage fist lights descending on her. "Not bad, let's spar again tomorrow."

As the sound of her voice faded, the Dragon Subduing Fists had already killed the girl, blasting her out from the dreamscape. At the same time, in order to execute his strike, Qin Wentian had no way of avoiding the girl's last palm strike, and he too was blasted out of the dreamscape.

"Hu....." The Dreamsky Forest. Qin Wentian woke up and drew in a huge mouthful of air. His body was slumped on the ground. The pain he felt was still vividly clear in his mind.

Removing the mask from his face, Qin Wentian sat up.

"5th level of Arterial Circulation, Storm-type Astral Soul, along with powerful innate techniques and skillful body movement techniques, I wonder which academy she hails from." Qin Wentian murmured to himself. That battle with the girl proved tremendously helpful in training his Garuda Movement Technique. That was why he did not use his Divine Energy-enhanced palm strikes to finish the girl off early into the fight.

Standing up and leaving the Dreamsky Forest, Qin Wentian continued his cultivation.

On the second day, Qin Wentian appeared in the City of Illusions to continue tempering himself and to hunt members of the Knight's Association. When he arrived at the circular platform region, that girl from yesterday was already there.

“This time around, you won't be so lucky.” That girl exclaimed, as she instantly dashed towards Qin Wentian. Apparently, the two of them were using each other to temper their movement techniques. Eventually, after a period of time had passed, Qin Wentian unceremoniously executed his Revolving Sea Imprint palm strikes, killing the girl in the dreamscape.

During the following days, the girl came to spar against him countless times. And every time, it ended in the defeat and death of the girl. However, it seemed as though she didn't mind at all. It was because she could feel rapid improvements in her innate body movement techniques. However, what made her depressed was that the rate of improvement by the fellow in the kirin mask was even faster than her own! Despite his disadvantage in cultivation levels, he could successfully kill her every time.

To Qin Wentian, this was also another form of training. Without fail, he would duel the girl everyday at the circular platform. Fighting against an opponent with a stronger level of cultivation naturally had its advantages. Other than honing his movement techniques, he could heighten his combat abilities as well. Besides the girl, Qin Wentian spent his time challenging the other students in the dreamscape as well, and after a period of time, many people

knew that in the City of Illusions, there was an extremely powerful kirin-masked fellow armed with ruthless techniques.

In the Royal Academy, there was a similar Dreamsky Forest. This was none other than the forest the elder from the Emperor Star Academy had created.

At this moment, in the Royal Academy's Dreamsky Forest, a particular girl was removing her mask and stomping her foot on the ground, full of unwillingness.

“Bastard.” Once again, Mu Rou was blasted to death by Qin Wentian. Cursing in a low voice, she exclaimed, “The kirin-masked fellow, doesn't he know how to treat girls?” Every time, even before she had a chance to speak, he would smash her to death.

“What happened? Did someone torture our lovely lady Mu Rou?” A voice laughed. The owner of the voice belonged to another girl, whose features were similarly concealed by a mask. Both of the two girls removed their masks at the same time, revealing two lovely-looking ladies underneath.

“Damn you. But still, that fellow's movement techniques was unfathomably powerful. Even I couldn't even touch him.” Mu Rou sighed in depression.

“Is that so? Seems like I'll have to pay him a visit tomorrow. I

want to find out for myself who exactly was it that caused our little Miss Mu to be unable to forget about him.” Chu Ling teased.

“Do you truly have that much free time? I thought your clan instructed you to take care of the Qin Clan’s Qin Yao?” Mu Rou pouted as she exclaimed.

“A woman that betrayed her clan, Qin Yao has already chosen to become one of the candidate for the Crown Prince’s wife. What a joke.” Chu Ling stated disdainfully.

“You can’t say such a thing about her. She’s actually quite pitiful too.” Mu Rou sighed.

“You can say that in this place, but it’s better for you to not repeat those words outside.” Chu Ling warned, as Mu Rou lightly nodded her head. She naturally understood the meaning behind Chu Ling’s words.

AGM 074 – Dueling Yanaro

Luo Huan decided to pay Qin Wentian a visit today in his dorm. However, upon her arrival, she only saw Fan Le and Little Rascal

“Where did Wentian go?” Luo Huan asked.

“Senior Sister, come in, come in.” Fan Le’s eyes brightened as he smiled and invited Luo Huan inside.

“That fellow is crazy. He would go inside the Dreamsky Forest on an almost daily basis to temper his skills.” Fan Le exclaimed.

Luo Huan’s eyes flickered. This fellow...she guessed that the motivation behind this crazy pace of cultivation, would most likely Luo Qianqiu. After all, she knew that the feeling of being disregarded was extremely humiliating. Evidently, Qin Wentian felt so as well.

“I shall wait for his return outside.. Fatty, come out and chat with me.” Luo Huan sat down beneath an ancient looking tree outside the dorms. Upon hearing the request, Fatty, immediately agreed, and he excitedly ran out, praying in his heart that Qin Wentian wouldn’t return anytime soon.

At this moment, Qin Wentian was naturally still inside the City of Illusions. The fiery red kirin mask emitted a sense of malevolence as a member of the Knight’s Association pitifully screamed under his feet, viciously glancing at Qin Wentian. Who in the world purposely chose to target the members of their

association?

This masked fellow, his martial prowess climbed exponentially. His rate of improvement was so shocking that they even doubted whether this masked man was the same masked man as before?

All of a sudden, members of the Knight's Association appeared in the surroundings. The light that radiated from their eyes was extremely cold, as their killing intent surged unbridled.

"I truly want to see who in the world might you be." Yanaro's voice was as sharp as swords as he directed the words to the masked figure.

Qin Wentian inclined his head and looked towards Yanaro. Previously in the academy, Yanaro had injured him with only a finger even after the appearance of the guest elder, Rain. It seemed as though, in the absence of Orchon, Yanaro was the person in charge of the matters for the Knight's Association.

Extending his hand, Qin Wentian pointed a finger towards Yanaro before slicing the finger across his neck and performing a gesture mimicking execution. Killing intent surged wildly in his eyes.

Yanaro's countenance froze. This fellow, how brazen was he! The bodies of the members from the Knight's Association all exploded forth in motion, dashing towards Qin Wentian.

At the same moment, Qin Wentian made his move as well. His body flickered as he transformed into a blur of shadows.

“Kill!” A Knight’s Association member stepped forth, appearing in front of Qin Wentian. The level of his cultivation base was the 5th level of Arterial Circulation. As he swiftly pierced forth with his spear, as fast as the sparks from lightning, Qin Wentian was already a dead man in his eyes. However, just before the spear touched his body, Qin Wentian’s body twisted gracefully away, like a leaf in the wind, avoiding the thrust. The member of the Knight’s Association only felt waves of coldness assailing him as his knees trembled. He didn’t even realise exactly when his throat had been slit.

Qin Wentian stepped past the body, as he continue sprinting forwards. Concentrating his Divine Energy in his feet, tremors would be felt from the ground for every step he took. Borrowing the explosive power of his steps, his jumping power was augmented as he soared through the skies, akin the flight of a Garuda, easily landing on the rooftop of a building.

Turning his head back, Qin Wentian’s gaze was directed at Yanaro before he disappeared from their sight.

“This level of movement technique.” The expression of Yanaro turned unsightly. Looking at the height of that building, Yanaro asked himself, would he be able to scale the building with just a single leap? It was as if that masked man could walk on air.

“I must know who exactly you are!” Yanaro roared, as he madly dashed forwards, chasing after the direction of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian's body was as light as a swallow, sprinting ahead. He had already shaken off the pursuit of the members from the Knight's Association. He, was no longer the Qin Wentian who had just enrolled in the Emperor Star Academy. In fact, he firmly believed that he wouldn't require too long before Yanaro would be trampled under his feet.

Unknowingly, his direction strayed towards the circular platform. However, this time round, he saw two people waiting there. Other than the girl he always sparred with, there was another female wearing a phoenix mask that obscured her features.

"Kirin-styled mask, is this him?" Chu Ling asked, turning her gaze to Mu Rou.

"Yes." Mu Rou nodded her head, causing the interest in Chu Ling's eyes to deepen.

"My movement techniques vastly improved after sparring with you. Thank you." Mu Rou gazed at Qin Wentian as she continued, "My name is Mu Rou, I'm from the Royal Academy. Do you mind being friends with me?"

As she spoke, she removed the mask covering her features, revealing a beautiful face underneath.

The gazes of Mu Rou and Chu Ling were riveted on Qin Wentian, as they waited for him to remove his mask.

However, underneath their gazes, Qin Wentian turn his body and lifted his feet, obviously preparing to depart from here.

Mu Rou's countenance froze as she saw this, and a dejected light could be seen in the depths of her eyes. She had already removed her mask, but to think that this fellow didn't even have an ounce of interest in her.

"Hold your steps." Chu Ling shouted. Qin Wentian paused and calmly observed her.

"Are you stupid or merely an idiot? Our Mu Rou has already removed her mask, so how could you treat her like this?" Chu Ling unhappily exclaimed. Qin Wentian's eyes flickered as he replied, "Did I promise anything?"

Thunderstruck, both Mu Rou and Chu Ling became speechless.

It was as though it was only wishful thinking on Mu Rou's part to think that Qin Wentian would be interested in being friends with her.

In truth, between her and Qin Wentian, other than sparring, there were basically no other interactions, and because of an extended period of sparring, her martial prowess had improved. She wanted to form a friendship with Qin Wentian, but who would have expected that Qin Wentian wasn't even the slightest bit interested in becoming friends with her.

In the other direction, several figures appeared, causing an light of extreme coldness to appear in Qin Wentian's eyes. These fellows, they were even better than blood hounds.

"Yanaro." Mu Rou's countenance fell. She didn't think that she would meet this fellow here

"Mu Rou." An expression of interest appeared on Yanaro's face, as he slowly approached with a smile. "Mu Rou, after our previous date, I've missed you terribly."

"Yanaro, stop your nonsense." Mu Rou coldly refuted.

"Stop bothering Mu Rou, you only know how to pester her." Chu Ling scolded in a low voice, causing the eyes of Yanaro to land on her. Realising who she was, he dipped in a low bow as he exclaimed, "So it is Princess Ling'er."

"So what it is, you don't know shame?" Chu Ling removed her mask as she stated icily.

"Is that so?" Coldness could be seen in the depths of Yanaro's eyes. With a smile, he stalked towards Mu Rou and Chu Ling. Mu Rou's countenance fell even further as she stuttered, "Wha...what are you trying to do?"

"Nothing much, but since we met each other by fate in this vast dreamscape, why are you still rejecting the machinations of destiny?" Yanaro approached Mu Rou, still maintaining a grim

smile, as a sharp light flashed in his eyes. These two women truly didn't give him face.

“Kill him.” At the same moment, Yanaro flicked a finger and pointed to Qin Wentian, causing the members of the Knight's Association to surround him.

Originally, Qin Wentian wanted to leave this place, but now, after seeing what was happening, he decided not to. Looking at the figures of Knights surrounding him, he picked one at random and exploded forwards in motion.

That person coldly stared at Qin Wentian as he released his Astral Soul, sending out a palm strike. Instantly, the sound of a beast howling in anger could be heard, as his Astral Soul manifested into the shape of a giant python.

A baleful aura gushed out from Qin Wentian. This time around, he didn't choose to evade. Instead, he channeled the Divine Energy in his body and executed the Dragon Subduing Fists, sending his fist towards his opponent amidst draconic roars. A thunderous sound echoed as the head of his opponent exploded, dying in an instant.

This scene caused another member from the Knight's Association that was dashing towards Qin Wentian to freeze slightly. In that very moment of hesitation, Qin Wentian's figure flickered as he appeared before the Knight, slashing his dagger through the arteries in his opponent's throat, killing another within the span of a single breath.

Yanaro, Mu Rou and Chu Ling all witnessed this. Extreme anger smouldered in the depths of Yanaro's eyes, while contrary, in the eyes of the two girls, there was a flicker of awe and wonder.

"5th level of Arterial Circulation." Yanaro's gaze grew as sharp as swords. This person had specifically hunted the members of his Knight's Association these few days. To think that his true strength was at the 5th level. He must have been hiding his strength previously, when he exuded the aura of the 4th level."

"He didn't use his full strength during our spars?" Mu Rou widened her eyes in shock as she felt the fluctuations of pressure emanated from Qin Wentian's body. Her cultivation base was also at the 5th level of Arterial Circulation, but she was very sure that Qin Wentian only had a cultivation base at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation all the time when he had sparred against her.

The truth was that Qin Wentian's level of cultivation had always been at the 4th level of Arterial Circulation. It wasn't until two days ago that he just broke through after countless fights against opponents in the City of Illusions.

Qin Wentian stopped his steps somewhere near to Yanaro. The pressure of a 5th level Arterial Circulation base violently emanated forth as he shouted to Mu Rou, "What are you doing? Hurry up and leave."

"Be careful." Mu Rou nodded and left with Chu Ling. There were no laws in the dreamscape, and with Yanaro around, it was highly

probable that he would do something unspeakable to her.

“I’m really very curious as to who the hell are you.” The fluctuations of pressure belonging to a cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation blasted out as he approached Qin Wentian.

His body flickered as he flicked a finger towards Qin Wentian. Astral Energy congealed in the air, transforming into a torrent of sharp swords.

Qin Wentian didn’t retreat. With a roar, he executed his Dragon Subduing Fist, easily breaking the sharp swords that were speeding towards him.

“Hmph.” Yanaro coldly snorted and stepped forwards. This time, he flicked all five of his fingers out. The space was filled with countless number of swords, swirling around with a sharp keen, as they explosively shot forth towards Qin Wentian.

Much to Yanaro’s surprise, Qin Wentian didn’t retreat, and had chosen to advance instead. Violently stepping forth, the earth trembled as his body transformed into a blur of shadows. Underneath the onslaught of the flying swords finger technique, Qin Wentian executed the Dragon Subduing Fists powered by his Divine Energy, refusing to even give away an inch of the ground he gained.

“You are courting death.” Yanaro roared with rage as a monstrous sword Qi emanated forth from his body. Inverting his

palms, he sent out a ten-fingered attack in Qin Wentian's direction. The finger attacks transformed into resplendent rays of sword light, tearing apart the void.

Yanaro smiled evilly in his heart. He knew that there was no way for the opponent to dodge this attack.

Qin Wentian's figure moved at the speed of lightning, but despite of this, countless swords could be seen piercing through his body. However, Qin Wentian continued pushing and finally broke through the barrage of swords.

"Scram." Yanaro shouted. His hands, similar to swords, pierced the air in front of him. Qin Wentian's heart was skewered through by Yanaro, but, Qin Wentian actually unexpectedly smiled. An instant later, his fist, containing the power of his Divine Energy, exploded the head of Yanaro, causing both of them to die in the dreamscape.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO." Yanaro howled in anger. He had been caught by surprise and hadn't seen the attack coming. What a disgrace! He actually lost to someone with cultivation level lower than his own. But who in the world was that crazy masked fellow? He was so determined to kill him even if he had to endure the pain of countless swords piercing through him.

Naturally he would not have linked the masked figure to Qin Wentian. Although Qin Wentian knew the Dragon Subduing Fists, there were many others who had also mastered this technique. Moreover, in his eyes, although Qin Wentian's talent was not too bad, he was still a weakling at the moment.

At the same time, Qin Wentian opened his eyes. However, instead of howling with anger, a grin could be seen plastered upon his face. Although this time it ended as a draw, he would surely trample Yanaro beneath his foot if they fought again in the future.

AgM 075 – Banquet At The Royal Palace

Qin Wentian roused himself and left the Dreamsky Forest. In his heart, he was wondering what the results would have been if the fight between Yanaro and him were real.

“Wentian.” Luo Huan smiled as she looked at Qin Wentian, who was lost in his thoughts.

“Senior Sister, is there anything I can do for you?”

“Earlier, didn’t you say you wanted to meet Qin Yao? I’ve investigated, and there are some strings I could pull to accomplish this.” Luo Huan said to Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian’s pupils widen in surprise as he heard that. He really wanted to see Qin Yao again, to chat with her and ask her how life had been treating her.

“How’s the arrangement?” Qin Wentian inquired with excitement.

“Seven days from now, there will be a banquet held at the Royal Palace, hosted personally by the 3rd prince himself. Its purpose is to welcome Qin Yao. Invitations have been sent out to many of the aristocratic clans. I’ve already found someone to arrange for you to enter, but there’s no way that you will be able to avoid certain groups of people whom you don’t want to meet. Do you still want to go?”

Luo Huan smiled as she explained. Hearing this, a sharp glow of light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“The people from Snowcloud Country take Qin Yao’s protection very seriously, so meeting her is not going to be so easy.” Luo Huan continued. Naturally, Qin Wentian understood this point very well. With his status as someone from the fallen Qin Clan, it was very tough for him to infiltrate the aristocrats from Chu Country.

“Senior Sister, thank you for all the troubles you have endured from the aristocratic clans for assisting me.” Qin Wentian was filled with gratitude. However, since there was a chance like this, there was no way he would give it up. He had to meet Qin Yao.

“Haha, you shouldn’t stereotype members from the aristocratic clans.” Luo Huan rolled her eyes, “There’s several of them who have good character as well. Other than a few notable exceptions like Ye WuQue and Orchon, the majority of them are not too bad. The only thing I dislike is that they want to divide the Emperor Star Academy with the power of the Knight’s Association.

“Wentian, when you entered the Royal Palace, you must be cautious at all times; do not underestimate your enemies. For example, the four princes from the Royal Clan and five princesses...all of the four princes are elites among their generation. Earlier, I said that this banquet was hosted by the 3rd prince. one of the strongest among all the princes and the one with the highest possibility of taking over the kingdom. This time around, after you enter the palace, you have to be extremely careful and take note of him.”

“Right, I will take take this into consideration.” Qin Wentian nodded slightly. Other than the princes, what Luo Huan said about

the Knight's Association was not pointless. After all, the aristocratic clans were able to garner enough power to form an association in the Emperor Star Academy, so there would surely be many elites among them.

“Senior Sister, there are still seven days’ worth of time, could you spar against me? I want to train my movement techniques.” Qin Wentian laughed as he spoke to Luo Huan.

“You want Senior Sister to accompany you for a whole seven days?” Luo Huan teased him with a wink.

“Senior Sister, currently, my movement techniques have reached a bottleneck, so please help me.” Qin Wentian thickened his skin before he continued. Naturally, he would only act this way with people he was familiar with. He obviously already regarded Luo Huan as one of his own family.

“Fine, fine, I’ve got it.” Luo Huan laughed. It had been a total of eight months ever since she met Qin Wentian. She silently marvelled at the change that came over him. His face had already lost all traces of his former childishness and gained a few lines of weathered determination. Evidently, the events he experienced caused him to mature even faster.

“Senior Sister, I want to train my movement techniques as well.” Fatty pitifully stared at Luo Huan.

“You? With your fat?” Luo Huan disdainfully glanced at Fan Le, laughing. Fan Le’s countenance immediately fell into the deepest

abyss. How could she poke fun at his weight so much?

Luo Huan's residence was built on a piece of spacious ground. Fatty sat in one corner, brooding, while Little Rascal basked in the sun next to him, its eyes looking at the spectacle in front.

Ahead, Luo Huan's long whip crackled and filled the skies with her lashes. Qin Wentian's footwork had already reached the pinnacle of the Skillful Mastery level. Those who looked at him could only widen their eyes in amazement as they marvelled at its exquisiteness. One could only see his actual body for a split second before countless afterimages trailed after it.

"This fellow, his cultivation already reached the 5th level of Arterial Circulation, and his movement techniques are so godly." Fatty grimaced. It seemed as though the hard work Qin Wentian had put in for his cultivation paid off. But still, he missed the times when he boasted and looked down on Qin Wentian back when he was at the 2nd level while Qin Wentian was at the first. Now, his cultivation level was only at the peak of the 4th level, losing out to Qin Wentian.

"Bang!" An explosive sound rang out through the air. Qin Wentian's body was finally locked down by Luo Huan's whip, which coiled around him. His shirt was all torn and tattered, as his steps were forcibly halted. Bitterly smiling, he stated, "Senior Sister, that was too brutal."

“How could this be real training if I don’t make you feel pressure?” Luo Huan laughed as she uncoiled her whip. However, she abruptly struck out again. “Watch my strike!” This time, Qin Wentian was ready for her. Sidestepping to the side, the whip missed his body by a narrow margin. Speechlessly, he stared at Luo Huan. If he had been struck by that last whip attack, Qin Wentian knew that he would have been seriously injured.

After half a day, the entirety of Qin Wentian’s body was covered by a sheen of perspiration. Traces of whiplashes could be seen on his body, as fresh blood dribbled down from his wounds. How ruthless! Seeing the state Qin Wentian was in caused Fan Le’s heart to shudder. Luckily, he was smart enough and did not participate together with him in Luo Huan’s training.

“Okay, time to take a break. How are you feeling?” Luo Huan laughed as she observed Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian approached Luo Huan, only to see that she was perspiring as well. Her well-endowed body was covered by the fragrance of her sweat. Her perspiration-soaked clothings only served to further accentuate her figure, outlining her twin peaks.

Upon seeing this, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but to feel a rush of blood. He almost suffered a nosebleed from Luo Huan’s tempting appearance.

“Senior Sister, you are so beautiful.” Qin Wentian smiled, causing Luo Huan to be stunned. After recovering, she smiled before stating, “Little fellow, you even dare to tease your Senior Sister?”

“I’m only speaking the truth.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders.

“Okay, enough rest, let’s continue.” Luo Huan’s eyes flickered with a strange glow as she laughed. The sound of her laughter brought back memories of the whip lashes that he had endured, and he involuntarily shivered. After the short break, the training session continued.

Under Luo Huan’s pressure, Qin Wentian’s movement techniques improved every day. And finally, on the fifth day, his Garuda Movement Technique had broken through and entered the Perfect Mastery level. However, if he wanted to reach the pinnacle of mastery, the Godly level, he would surely have to hunt more high-level flying-types demonic beasts and consume their essence.

Now that he had stepped into the Perfect Realm of Mastery, even if it was Luo Huan, she now had to take the sparring seriously before she could even hit Qin Wentian. The fluidity and swiftness of his movements left her in awe, causing her to re-evaluate how powerful the Garuda Movement Technique was.

In the City of Illusions, after a battle, Mu Rou unconsciously walked to a familiar place. However, she could not help but to feel a sense of disappointment after arriving at the circular platform.

“That fellow, he no longer appears here.” Mu Rou’s beautiful eyes flickered. Ever since she removed her mask, that masked figure had never appeared before her again. She didn’t even have the chance to express her thanks.

Perhaps it was out of force of habit, but Mu Rou would make it a point to stop at the circular platform after her other battles, waiting for the fellow in the kirin mask to appear.

“Wow, did our Miss Mu get herself lost in the river of longing?” A gentle voice filled with charm floated over. Mu Rou turned her body and glared at a girl wearing a phoenix mask. “I only wish to thank him personally, it’s not what you think!”

“Oh, is that so? Then why do you wait here every day?” Chu Ling teased.

“Trying my luck. My movement techniques have further improved during these few days. I wish to spar against him again.” The tone behind her voice was gentle, revealing her quiet nature.

“Very well. Anyway, let us first depart the Dreamsky Forest. There are only two more days before the 3rd prince will host the banquet in Qin Yao’s honor. At that time, let’s go together.” Chu Ling stated as she pulled Mu Rou along. Both of them prepared to depart the Dreamsky Forest.

“The 3rd prince is personally hosting this in Qin Yao’s honor? But I heard that previously, the matter of the Qin Residence’s destruction had a lot to do with him. He is ruthless and decisive, so

why did he suddenly invite Qin Yao to attend the banquet?”

Mu Rou curiously asked. Naturally, she heard of the personalities and character of the princes from the Royal Clan. The 3rd prince was young, talented and filled with ambition. Not only that, he was extremely smart. He should already have guessed at the motives of Qin Yao’s visit.

The 3rd prince’s character was very similar to his Majesty in his younger days. In addition to that, his talent was extremely high, and he was favored by his Majesty. In the future, the position of crown prince would most likely be him.

“The thoughts of my third brother are not for us to decipher. However, if Qin Yao truly came with the intention to rescue Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, it’s nothing but a fool’s dream. I’m afraid that third brother invited her for the purpose of humiliating her in the banquet.” Chu Ling coldly snorted. “This time around, my third brother invited many people with prestigious status over, including Mo Qingcheng.....”

Chu Ling was a princess, the daughter of the king, which was why she was referring to the 3rd prince as her third brother.

“Yanaro will be there as well, no?.” Mu Rou asked, somewhat dejected.

“He should be there, but he definitely wouldn’t dare to make a scene there.”

Chu Ling continued, “However, there’s one other irritating thing; there was actually someone who approached me for my help and asked me to bring a person together with me to attend the banquet.”

“Huh, who’s that person you’re supposed to bring?” Mu Rou inquired.

“From the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian — a person from the Qin Clan.” Chu Ling stated with contempt. “Although this person is said to have above average talent, he’s supremely arrogant as well, and he even killed Orchon’s brother, Orfon! And now, in order to meet Qin Yao, he’s willing to sacrifice anything to get help from me. He definitely wants to use the power of Qin Yao’s current status for his own personal gain.”

“Qin Wentian...” Mu Rou mouthed the name a few times. “Isn’t he Qin Yao’s brother? You should calm yourself down. Just treat it like you’re helping a friend. Don’t make things hard for him.”

“Hmph.” Chu Ling snorted. She’d heard that the friend who had sought help for this was, in turn, asked to do so by another friend.

AGM 076 – Mo Qingcheng's Worries

Two days later, Qin Wentian was led by a stranger to the perimeter of a beautiful palace.

This palace was situated inside of the Fifth Sector of the Royal Capital. Raising his head to look the stone stele that was erected outside the palace, he could see the words “Violet Palace” inscribed upon it.

“The Violet Palace?”

Qin Wentian had heard this name before. Scanning his memories, his pupils abruptly contracted once he recalled. Previously, on the day of Bai Qingsong's birthday celebration, one of the guests that had come bearing gifts in congratulations was none other than the Violet Palace!

“I presume that the reason that people from the Violet Palace went that day, was because of the Ye Clan. Although the power the Ye Clan wields is huge, why did the Violet Palace still need to give them face? Could it be that the power and status of the Violet Palace isn't even comparable to the Ye Clan?” Qin Wentian silently mused in his heart. What a coincidence, the person that Luo Huan sought help from, had actually brought him over here to the Violet Palace.

Right now, he didn't even know what the current state of the Bai Clan was. This hypocrite, Bai Qingsong, the despicable actions he'd committed were firmly engraved upon his heart. Qin Wentian

could ignore everything that'd happened — the attempt on his life by Bai Qingsong, and even the betrayal from Autumn Snow. The only exception was that during the darkest hours of the Qin Clan, Bai Qingsong had actually joined Icehawk and Ye Mo in the attack, forcing them onto the path of death! This debt of anger was something that Qin Wentian would never forget.

Within the Violet Palace, Qin Wentian's gaze shifted over, and he noticed a few silhouettes walking out. His eyes widened in surprised as he realised that the woman in the lead was someone that he'd met before, inside the Dreamsky Forest. This person was precisely Chu Ling! Chu Ling had appeared beside Mu Rou during their last meeting, before his duel with Yanaro. Qin Wentian's only impression of Chu Ling was that she was extremely wilful, and had a fiery temper .

Although Qin Wentian knew who Chu Ling was, Chu Ling had no idea who he is. As she approached Qin Wentian, she coldly exclaimed, "Are you Qin Wentian?"

"I am him." Qin Wentian nodded his head.

"Wear this, you'll be one my guards. Since I promised someone, naturally, I'll bring you in. But don't you dare create trouble for me." Chu Ling snorted. Qin Wentian's status alone was trouble. Both the Ye Clan and Ou Clan wanted his death. If they knew that she'd helped Qin Wentian, Chu Ling would be the one in trouble.

"Right." Qin Wentian quickly wore the attire. Although Chu Ling's mannerism towards him was extremely cold, it was what he wanted as well. He didn't want to have any unneeded interactions

between them.

“You guys follow behind me, let’s go.” Chu Ling mounted her horse, as it galloped forwards. Qin Wentian and two other guards, sprinted behind, with inconceivable speed.

After about an hour, Chu Ling had led Qin Wentian and the two guards into the Royal Palace. They entered the palace from the left gate, and arrived at a huge villa. This villa was extremely spacious, there were even mountains and lakes situated in it. Not only that, but Qin Wentian could still faintly sense traces of Demonic Qi in the air.

“Half of the Royal Capital, including the Royal Palace, is surrounded by the Dark Forest, hence, the traces of Demonic Qi. Although it borders on the perimeter of the Dark Forest, this villa can truly be considered extravagant.”

Qin Wentian’s gaze shifted forward. Ahead, he could see a few other luxurious villas that were built within the grounds of the Dark Forest. In the entirety of the Royal Capital, only those that belonged to the great clans would be able to spend money on such a scale.

“This place is the hunting ground of the Royal Clan. It extends all the way into the Dark Forest. Follow me closely, lest you be devoured by demonic beasts. Don’t blame me if that happens.” Chu Ling snorted, not even turning her head as she made her mount increased it’s speed, not waiting for Qin Wentian and the two other guards to catch up.

“This is the attitude of a rich young miss from the Royal Clan indeed. What a b*tch.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart as he sped up. The hunting ground for the Royal Clan was so vast that it seemed that he’d only be able to come into contact with Qin Yao after the banquet had started.

“Mu Rou!” At this moment, Chu Ling called out when she saw a few familiar figures in the distance in front of her. The figures were all mounted on beautiful white horses, and slowed their paces down when they heard the shout. The girl in the lead turned her head as she smiled, “Chu Ling, you’ve arrived too!”

“Yeah, it seems like we both arrived way too early.” Chu Ling laughed. Mu Rou’s guards followed behind her as well. The only difference was that they were allowed mounts, instead of running on foot. From this, one could see the differences in personalities between Chu Ling and Mu Rou.

Chu Ling, as someone that hailed from the Royal Clan, had to have her guards meet a certain standard. Their responsibility was to protect the person that they were guarding, and they were entitled to the cultivation resources provided by the Royal Clan. However, the position of a guard was considered to be very lowly — only a very limited amount of extremely powerful guards would enter into the good graces of the Royal Clan; but even then, they wouldn’t have much freedom.

And thus, those with real talent would never be willing to become guards for others. At the very least, they would choose to be a “guest”, instead of becoming a guard.

Qin Wentian's eyes widened in surprised when he saw Mu Rou. This girl was the person who'd sparred with him countless times inside of the Dreamsky Forest. To think that he'd meet her here...

Mu Rou also felt her intuition calling out to her, and she glanced over towards Qin Wentian, before lightly nodded her head at him, causing Qin Wentian to freeze slightly.

By right, Mu Rou, shouldn't be acquainted with him. Qin Wentian didn't know that Chu Ling had brought up the topic of bringing him along to Mu Rou, and thus, this was how Mu Rong had managed to guess that he was Qin Wentian. However, despite this, she still didn't know that he was the kirin-masked guy that she was sparring with in the Dark Forest.

"Let's go." Chu Ling slightly furrowed her brows upon noting that Mu Rou had realised who Qin Wentian was. She hadn't wished for others to know that it was her who'd brought Qin Wentian into the banquet.

How sharp were Qin Wentian's senses? He'd already felt the unhappiness that Chu Ling held in regards to bringing him along.

"After meeting sister Qin Yao, I'll stop all interactions with her." Qin Wentian silently stated in his heart. He didn't like Chu Ling's personality. Even if she'd agreed to help her friend by bringing him in, why was she still showing such an attitude? If she was afraid that she'd be implicated, she shouldn't have even agreed to help in the first place.

Soon afterwards, many others from the other aristocratic clans arrived at the hunting grounds that were situated on the boundary of the Dark Forest and the Royal Clan.

The 3rd prince was still young, and thus, the people he invited would naturally be those of the younger generation.

Ye Zhan from the Ye Clan was here too. Other than his guards, he'd brought along two others.

“Liu Yan, these are the hunting grounds of the Royal Clan. Usually, there'd be many descendants from the Royal Clan hunting demonic beasts in here, tempering their own strength.” Ye Zhan smiled at the girl standing beside him. This girl was actually Liu Yan! And beside Liu Yan, was his brother Liu Yue. That day, when Ye Zhan and Orfon had led others to hunt Qin Wentian, by a twist of fate, he'd met Liu Yan. After which, he'd begun a period of courtship, trying to woo Liu Yan.

Although initially Liu Yan had been enamored by Qin Wentian, in truth, during this period of time, Ye Zhan had truly treated her like a princess. Combined with the constant encouragement given by Liu Yue, Liu Yan had gradually fallen for Ye Zhan.

Liu Yue spoke the truth; in this vast Chu Country, there were many geniuses that had talents higher than their own. If they didn't have someone backing them up, and they didn't have any cultivation resources, how could they compete with others. Not only that, they might even end up like that friend of theirs – dead;

killed by demonic beasts in the forest.

“So impressive. No wonder that these are the Royal Clan’s personal hunting grounds.” Liu Yue continued, as he continued to lick Ye Zhan’s boots, “Ye Zhan, were it not for you, we wouldn’t even be qualified to enter here.”

“Big bro, you’re my brother — there’s no need to stand on ceremony with me.” Ye Zhan smiled. The gentle smile on his handsome visage caused those who looked at it to feel extremely comfortable.

“Haha, you’re right, we’ll be brothers through marriage sooner or later.” Liu Yue laughed.

As the sound of Liu Yue faded, suddenly, he visibly trembled as his countenance froze, his gaze landing on an enchanting silhouette in front of him.

Following Liu Yue’s gaze, Ye Zhan’s pupils narrowed as well. It was none other than the number one beauty of the Chu Country – Mo Qingcheng.

“Even Mo Qingcheng is here today.” Liu Yue murmured. He’d only met Mo Qingcheng once, and that was during the expedition by the coalition of the nine martial academies. But despite having done so, he’d never been able to forget Mo Qingcheng. Her beauty was unparalleled in the world!

However, he was also clear about his own status. The disparity between Mo Qingcheng's statuses already made it so that he would never have any chance to interact with her. He could only fantasize in his heart.

“The number one beauty of the Chu Country... she's really beautiful.” Liu Yan herself was also pretty, but compared to Mo Qingcheng, her beauty would only be considered ordinary — a backdrop in which to further enhance the beauty of Mo Qingcheng.

Other than Mo Qingcheng, her other friend Nolan was here as well. Although both of them saw Ye Zhan and co, they didn't take the initiative to greet them — in fact, they turned and walked away.

“That woman actually ended up together with Ye Zhan. I wonder if that little fellow Qin Wentian would be angered to death. He probably still thinks that Liu Yan was the one who saved him.” Nolan whispered. Mo Qingcheng sighed, as her beautiful eyes flickered. “Speaking of Qin Wentian, I still owe him an apology.”

“Stop being so silly. No matter what, you saved his life before. You even carried him on your back, and gave him a top grade, 2nd level miracle pill. Even if you misunderstood him once, so what? At most, it could be said that the debt of karma between the both of you has been negated.” Nolan rolled her eyes at Mo Qingcheng.

“But, that day...in that situation...I could tell that he was extremely disappointed in me.” Mo Qingcheng sighed again, as she thought back to that day. How pitiful and lonely Qin Wentian had

looked as he'd carried Fan Le on his back, and as he walked away. She couldn't help but blame herself for that.

AGM 077 – Chu Tianjiao

Chu Ling and Mu Rou continued advancing on their horses, and they soon arrived in a vast, spacious field. The distant entrance was filled by armored soldiers standing on guard.

“Beyond that entrance should be the gardens of the Royal Palace.” Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over to the entrance. Most likely, the members of the Royal Clan would use this garden exit to enter into the hunting grounds.

“The esteemed 3rd prince as well as the Snowcloud Country’s respected guests have yet to arrive. Please wait outside for now.” A soldier approached and explained the situation politely to Chu Ling and Mu Rou. Afterwards, the two of them dismounted and waited outside the entrance.

“Why is the Snowcloud Country so proud?” Chu Ling asked somewhat unhappily.

“Well, they were invited over as guests. Let’s just wait for them patiently.” Mu Rou smiled. At this moment, others had also arrived, and they went forwards to greet Chu Ling and Mu Rou. The majority of the guests already knew each other before this, so although they were not very familiar with each other, they looked very harmonious together on the surface.

“Chu Ling,” At this moment, the sound of a voice drifted over. Chu Lin turned her gaze, and as she noticed the person who called her name out, a smile lit up on her face, “Ye Zhan, you came as

well!”

“Of course.” Ye Zhan smiled and nodded. Shifting his gaze to the guard standing behind Chu Ling, he was shocked to find killing intent flickering in the cold gaze of the guard, who was staring daggers at him.

Obviously, Qin Wentian recognised Ye Zhan, someone that sought to kill him together with Orfon during the expedition in the Dark Forest.

Ye Zhan’s countenance froze, but he swiftly recovered. A shallow grin spread on his face.

“Qin Wentian.” Ye Zhan spat the name out, causing many to train their gazes upon his direction. Very swiftly, they all remembered where they had heard the name ‘Qin Wentian’.

A descendant of the fallen Qin Clan, a new student from the Emperor Star Academy, Orfon’s killer!

Chu Ling froze. She had never expected Ye Zhan to know who Qin Wentian was. Not only that, Ye Zhan had even shouted out the name in such a loud voice, causing her to be placed in a difficult position. The power her Violet Palace wielded couldn’t be compared to the power of the Ye Clan.

As Qin Wentian noticed Liu Yan and Liu Yue standing beside Ye Zhan, an uncomfortable feeling crept into his heart. That day,

when he and Fan Le were avoiding the pursuit of Orfon and Ye Zhan, Qin Wentian had instructed Liu Yan not to say that they were acquainted so that she could avoid trouble.

But Qin Wentian had never predicted that Liu Yan, would actually stick together to Ye Zhan. Not only that, the relationship between them seemed somewhat intimate.

Ye Zhan noticed the direction of Qin Wentian's gaze. He smiled as he pulled Liu Yan over to him. "Yan`er, you should have long been acquainted with Qin Wentian, right?"

Liu Yan had an extremely awkward expression on her face. After all, Ye Zhan wanted to kill Qin Wentian, she was already acquainted with Qin Wentian. Because Qin Wentian saved her, she felt good will towards him, and thus, she decided to keep the fact a secret.

"Yes." Liu Yan lightly nodded her head shyly, as she smiled to Qin Wentian, "Thank you for saving me previously."

"No need for thanks, treat it as though I've repaid your kindness in saving me." Qin Wentian's countenance was calm. As the saying goes, 'Each to his own'. Liu Yan had the right to choose. Qin Wentian didn't blame her, but he never would have expected for her to have chosen the person who wanted to kill him – Ye Zhan! This put him in a difficult position. What attitude should he adopt when dealing with Ye Zhan?

Even now, Qin Wentian believed that Liu Yan was the one who

had saved him earlier.

“Hehe.” Ye Zhan’s laughter was laced with coldness. Shifting his gaze to Chu Ling, he inquired, “Chu Ling, Qin Wentian belongs to a traitorous clan, and not only that, he even killed Ye Mo and Ye Lang from my Ye Clan. You should know this, right?”

“This fellow.” Chu Ling cursed in a low tone as she continued, “I didn’t know he was Qin Wentian. He is merely a servant that was employed to guard me.”

“Servant? Oh, I see.” Ye Zhan sneered. Turning his gaze back to Qin Wentian, he continued, “So, you even lower yourself to be a servant. How befitting of someone of your status.”

“For the sake of sister Qin Yao, I must tolerate her.” Qin Wentian stated to himself. He had never thought that the character of this princess was so despicable.

Ye Zhan already guessed that the reason Qin Wentian was here today was for Qin Yao. But as a member of the Ye Clan, he already received some inside information on what was going to happen here today. Now that Qin Wentian delivered himself, Ye Zhan couldn’t help but to laugh coldly in his heart.

Holding Liu Yan’s hand, Ye Zhan led her away while laughing. At this moment, Chu Ling became to center of attention.

“Qin Wentian, leave now, this place is unsuitable for you.” Chu

Ling felt the gazes of the crowd landing on her and couldn't help but whisper to Qin Wentian in a low tone. "For the matters here today, I will explain to my friend. I don't wish to help you any longer."

Although the volume behind Chu Ling's words wasn't loud, the crowd could hear clearly what she had said. They now knew that Chu Ling was asked by someone else to bring Qin Wentian in here.

"As a disciple of the Emperor Star Academy, he doesn't even have the qualifications to enter this place. This is the disparity between status." Liu Yue gazed at Qin Wentian. He had already keenly felt the difference between his current and past lifestyle. In the Royal Capital, there was many differences in the ranks of aristocrats. Here, the weak would only be good for the strong. This was the stark reality.

"The Ye Clan is our only support." Liu Yue silently stated in his heart. He whispered to Liu Yan, who was beside him, in a low tone. "Liu Yan, you know that Qin Wentian is interested in you. You better wake him up and draw a clear boundary henceforth."

"I understand." Liu Yan froze for a moment before lightly nodding her head.

After hearing Chu Ling's words, Qin Wentian froze. This Chu Ling had already agreed to help, and even more, they've already come so far. At the last moment, she was going to rescind her help and not allow him to enter?

“How laughable. Goodbye.” Qin Wentian laughed coldly. It wasn’t that he had no temper, but to see Qin Yao, he had no choice but to control it. To think that now, Chu Ling would actually tell him to get lost at the very last moment.

“What kind of attitude are you showing me?” Chu Ling shouted coldly.

“If you didn’t agreed to help earlier, then that would’ve been it. But since you’ve already agreed, why did you rambled on and on, showing such a cold attitude and even treating me as a real servant? Who the hell do you think you are?” Qin Wentian coldly regarded Chu Ling with contempt. Immediately after, his body flickered, moving at inconceivable speed while exhibiting peerless exquisiteness. Since Chu Ling didn’t want to help, he would not stay on and beg. Qin Wentian would have to think of some other idea.

“Huh?” At this moment, as Mu Rou witnessed the movement techniques of Qin Wentian, her heart thumped wildly. She was extremely familiar with this movement technique.

Mu Rou sparred countless times against Qin Wentian in the Dreamsky Forest. How could she not be familiar with his movements!?

“It’s him.” Mu Rou’s heart quivered.

“Wait.” Mu Rou open her mouth to speak, causing Qin Wentian to halt in his steps as he turned and studied her.

“You can come in with me.” Mu Rou smiled towards Qin Wentian. Hearing this, he became filled with puzzlement.

“We are friends, are we not? Me bringing my friend to the banquet, there shouldn’t be a problem with this.” Mu Rou smiled beautifully. Qin Wentian widened his eyes in surprise, his heart filled with bewilderment. However, he understood that Mu Rou was helping him, and thus, he didn’t wish to be pretentious. Nodding his head at her, Qin Wentian stated, “Many thanks.”

“Mu Rou.” Chu Ling unhappily looked to Mu Rou. Didn’t Mu Rou’s action mean that she was slapping Chu Ling in the face?

“Chu Ling, I didn’t interfere in your decisions earlier. Now that I’ve decided to bring him in, the reason is not because I’m going against you, but because of my own reasons.” Mu Rou gazed at Chu Ling as she stated, hoping that Chu Ling would understand that Mu Rou wasn’t taking an aggressive stance.

“Is that so? But why do I feel that your actions are very intentional?” Chu Lin was extremely unhappy. “Mu Rou, I treated you as my friend, but you still do this to me? I’m so disappointed in you.”

After saying this, Chu Ling turned around and departed.

“Chu Ling.” Mu Rou still wanted to continue, only to hear Chu Ling once more, “No need to explain anymore. In the future, we will walk our own paths. Just treat it as though we were never

friends”

Mu Rou’s countenance froze. As she turned, she only saw Qin Wentian, but she managed to still force out a smile. However, that smile was slightly tinged with bitterness.

“Chu Ling’s personality is just like this, so please don’t blame her.” Mu Rou explained to Qin Wentian. She then murmured to herself, “She will calm down after a few days and not be as angry towards me.”

Qin Wentian sighed in his heart. With anyone who was able to break their promise to a friend so easily, their moral standing could be seen quite easily from this. Mu Rou had regarded Chu Ling too highly; Qin Wentian knew that Mu Rou was too kind in her heart.

Mu Rou didn’t even know who he was, but she immediately stood forth forwards and used the excuse of bringing a ‘friend’ to help him to gain access. Her actions were open, and she wasn’t afraid of offending others. Chu Ling was someone much more hypocritical in comparison.

At this moment, the soldiers guarding the garden’s entrance were dismissed, and the crowd began to enter the garden.

“Let’s enter.” Mu Rou smiled at Qin Wentian without revealing the fact that she already knew who he was. She felt awe in her heart. The person that had actually clashed with Yanaro was actually the Emperor Star Academy’s new student, Qin Wentian!

Qin Wentian entered the garden with Mu Rou. They were led to a lush, green landscape, where beautiful lakes adorned the landscape. In the center of this lush green landscape, a scrumptious banquet was prepared. However, the 3rd prince had not arrived yet, and thus, no one dare to enter.

Far off in the distance, a figure could be seen, slowly walking out of a pavilion.

This person was a youth wearing a simple and tidy attire. His figure well proportioned, with eyes filled with spirit. An extraordinary good-looking man with an extraordinary aura.

This youth's eyes contained hints of laughter. His eyes seemed to sparkle with a spirit so intense that the light they emitted seemed capable of brightening up the entire atmosphere.

Beside him stood a youth whom Qin Wentian was acquainted with. This person was none other than the demon of the Emperor Star Academy – Luo Qianqiu!

Both of them walked side by side, disregarding status.

The two of them halted their steps after they exited the pavilion. Smiling, that extraordinary-looking youth glanced behind him, as though he was waiting for the appearance of an esteemed guest. A graceful figure walked forth, causing great shock to those in the

crowd. The last person who walked out was, Qin Yao.

“The 3rd Prince, his Highness is here.”

“The 3rd Prince still looks as refined as ever, like a son the Heavens are proud of.”

The crowd all had smiles on their faces, and they involuntarily call out praises as the extraordinary youth walked near. The 3rd Prince, Chu Tianjiao, given the name of Tianjiao (Heaven's Pride), was the prince with the highest chances of taking over the Chu Country. He was also in good graces with the current Emperor. Not only that, his talent was outstanding, and he was ranked 2nd among the Royal Capital ten prodigies.

Chi Tianjiao, the pride of heaven of this generation!

TN Note: 楚天骄 Chu Tianjiao, Chu is a surname, Tian = Sky/Heavens, Jiao = Pride/Arrogance

AGM 078 – Qin Yao's Thoughts

The moment Qin Wentian cast a glance at Chu Tianjiao, he could sense that this person was a dragon and phoenix among the masses. He had never thought that the 3rd prince would be someone so outstanding and extraordinary.

“Everyone, please, have a seat. There’s no need to be ill at ease.” Chu Tianjiao slowly strode forwards and smiled to the crowd. After doing so, he graciously first invited Qin Yao and her entourage to be seated before he himself sat down. The crowd followed after.

“Today, all those whom I’ve invited are the talents and heroes of the younger generation. This way, there would surely be common topics of interest.” Chu Tianjiao laughed. “Let me introduce to you all Qin Yao from the Snowcloud Country. And as for the person on my left, he is my best friend, Luo Qianqiu. I’m sure all of you have heard of him.”

Mu Rou’s seat was quite a distance away from the main seat. Next to her, Qin Wentian’s gaze was riveted on Qin Yao. Qin Yao had spotted him as well, but for some reason, her eyes contained traces of hidden bitterness, as if she were blaming him for appearing here today.

Previously, the reason why Qin Yao intentionally ignored Qin Wentian was because she didn’t want to embroil Qin Wentian with the matter of obtaining revenge for the Qin Clan. To think that this fellow came all the way here today.

Qin Wentian, as though he knew what Qin Yao was thinking, involuntarily sighed in his heart, “Sister Qin Yao didn’t want to implicate me, this was the intention of 2nd and 3rd uncle previously as well. Of course I’ve understand this point. But to think that she appeared in the Chu Country, how could i sit on the fence and ignore the matter, not asking her the actual reason behind her visit.”

“Luo Qianqiu, the Emperor Star Academy’s genius Luo Qianqiu. How could anyone not know about him?.” A hearty voice drifted over as a few silhouettes appeared in the distance, walking over. The person in the lead clasp his hands and bowed slightly with a smile to Chu Tianjiao. He greeted, “Yanaro was slightly late. I seek Your Highness’s forgiveness.”

“Yanaro, quickly come in and be seated.” Chu Tianjiao didn’t exude a majestic air as he earnestly waved Yanaro to his seat. “You and Luo Qianqiu are both geniuses from the Emperor Star Academy. You all can have a good chat later.”

“There are too many geniuses hailing from the Emperor Star Academy. In this very banquet, there’s one here who’s been in perpetual highlights, even daring to steal Young Master Luo’s Blood Ember Fruits. He has no regards for anyone and is incomparably arrogant.” Yanaro smiled coldly as he walked towards Qin Wentian. Stopping right in front of him, he added. “Qin Wentian, am I right?”

Luo Qianqiu’s gaze drifted over and landed on Qin Wentian. However, it lasted for merely a second, indicating that he didn’t care too much about it.

In his eyes, Qin Wentian wasn't worthy of his notice.

He and Qin Wentian belonged to different worlds. He remembered that previously, were it not for the appearance of the Greencloud Association's leader, Qin Wentian would have already died under his hands.

But now, since matters had passed and he already spared Qin Wentian once, he wouldn't care too much if Qin Wentian were to die today.

Qin Wentian's eyes were on Yanaro. Just like what Luo Huan had said, over here at the banquet, he would meet many people he didn't want to meet. But since he was already here, he didn't have any complaints.

"Based on your status, you shouldn't be appearing in a place such as this." Yanaro, noting the silence of Qin Wentian, continued his provocation.

"He followed Chu Ling in using the status of a servant." Ye Zhan interjected with a laugh, causing Yanaro to lightly nodding his head. He then shifted his gaze to Mu Rou, who was beside Qin Wentian, and smiled, "Mu Rou, why are you sitting together with such a fellow?"

"He is a friend of mine." Mu Rou smiled coldly to Yanaro. "Since he is my friend, it's only natural that we sit together."

“Friend? This person is the man who killed Ye Lang and Orfon. Mu Rou, are you sure he’s your friend?” Yanaro’s smile turned even colder, causing Mu Rou’s countenance to grow extremely unsightly. This Yanaro was too ruthless. If she continued to claim that Qin Wentian was her friend, wouldn’t she be offending the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan?

A struggle could be seen visibly on Mu Rou’s countenance before she spoke, “A friend means a friend, no matter his background or status. That is my problem alone.”

“And what if i tell you that Makino also died by his hands?” Ye Zhan laughed coldly. Hearing this, Mu Rou’s eyes to tremble as she gazed back at Qin Wentian.

“During the training expedition in the Dark Forest, Orfon brought along a cultivator with the power to control beasts to kill me. I killed that person in response.” Qin Wentian confirmed when he saw Mu Rou looking at him. Although Makino had been slain by Fan Le, essentially, it was the same as him killing Makino. Even so, he wasn’t afraid to admit it, although he still sighed in his heart. He didn’t expect that Mu Rou, someone that was willing to help him, would actually be of the same clan as Makino.

“Since that’s the case, we can only blame the fact that Makino was not strong enough to even protect himself.” Mu Rou sighed. Although she and Makino hadn’t been very close, they were undeniably from the same clan. And thus, Mu Rou felt slightly uncomfortable in her heart regarding this matter.

“But even if that’s the case, what does it have to do with me being friends with Qin Wentian?” Suddenly, Mu Rou smiled. “Him being my friend has nothing to do with the my clan’s affairs.”

“Hehe.” Yanaro smiled icily before sitting down in his seat.

Qin Wentian’s fists were tightly clenched. He was now close to turning 17. During this past year, he had experienced many things, so with regards to this current circumstances, he no longer had a youth’s impulsiveness. With a smile free of worries, he poured a cup of wine and raise the cup towards Mu Rou.

“If there’s ever a chance, I will definitely repay this debt of favor in the future.” Qin Wentian drank the cup of wine.

Casting his gaze around the crowd, Qin Wentian noticed that Liu Yan intentionally avoided his gaze when it drew near.

Qin Wentian was still calm, feeling no anger nor disappointment. His only reaction was to smile lightly.

“Qin Wentian.” Liu Yan suddenly called out and lifted up her cup. “Thank you for saving my life that day back in the Dark Forest. If you ever need help in the future.....”

“You have no need to say anything further.” Qin Wentian interjected. He lifted his cup in return, draining the cup in one gulp. “Each to his own. I don’t have the qualifications nor the power to direct your choices. At the same time, thank you for your

intentions, but I have no need for your help. From this moment onwards, just treat it as though we were strangers who were once acquainted with each other.”

Liu Yan still wanted to speak, only to see Liu Yue speak first. “It would be better this way.”

As Qin Wentian swept his gaze over to Liu Yue, sharpness radiated from his gaze. He had long known that Liu Yue was this type of person, and had no desire to bother himself with Liu Yue. After all, they would have no further interactions in the future.

Standing up, Qin Wentian walked to the middle of the crowd and looked at Chu Tianjiao.

He was very clear in his heart that on the day when the Ye Clan led men to extinguish his Qin Clan, the person in front of him had been one of the masterminds behind the assault other than the Ye Clan.

“Your Highness. The reason for my appearance here today is to speak with my sister, Qin Yao. Could Your Grace allow me some time alone with her?” Qin Wentian directly stated, looking at the 3rd prince.

Chu Tianjiao’s expression remained still, but he eventually smiled and nodded his head, “I will not interfere if she agrees.”

“Thank you, your Highness.” After Qin Wentian spoke, he didn’t

walk towards Qin Yao's direction. Instead, he walked towards the direction of the crowd as he turned his head back and ordered, "Sister, come with me."

Hearing Qin Wentian's strict tone, Qin Yao revealed traces of embarrassment on her face as she stood up and followed after Qin Wentian. The scene caused many to feel humorous. Although Qin Wentian was her little brother, why did it felt as though Qin Yao was the junior and Qin Wentian was the elder instead?

Qin Wentian walked for quite a distance before arriving at a remote location of the garden. Seeing Qin Yao close behind him, his face contorted with worry as he asked, "What exactly is happening?"

"You...this fellow...you know that I'm your elder sister, right!" Qin Yao glared at Qin Wentian helplessly.

"Glad that you know it." Qin Wentian stepped forwards and cupped his hands around Qin Yao's face. The gaze in his eyes softened with gentleness.

"Sister, what exactly is happening? Why did you become one of the candidates for the wife of the Snowcloud Country's crown prince? Is this what you want? Or were you forced into it?"

"Wentian, don't bother yourself with this. You should just focus on increasing your strength in the Emperor Star Academy. For matters outside the academy, leave it to me." Qin Yao's heart softened after looking at Qin Wentian's gentle gaze. The tone of

her voice was lined with traces of pleading, hoping Qin Wentian would stay out of the matter regarding the Qin Clan.

She had been constantly keeping tabs on Qin Wentian while she was in the Snowcloud Country. Knowing that her brother was highly regarded by the Emperor Star Academy, she had no wish to see him implicated with matters of the Qin Clan.

“How can I stand aside and not concern myself with your problems? Even if this was what you want, you have to let me first take a look at the crown prince of Snowcloud Country to see if he’s a suitable match for you. If this is against your wishes, as long as I, Qin Wentian, am alive, I swear to the Heavens that I will allow no one to force you into doing anything that’s against your will.”

Qin Wentian’s gaze was filled with resoluteness. This was his promise to Qin Yao. They had grown up and depended on each other for so many years, and thus, the closeness they shared had long surpassed that of ordinary blood siblings. Not only that, he had behaved like an elder brother many times instead of the younger brother. How could he allow Qin Yao to suffer?

Qin Yao gazed at Qin Wentian as she whispered. “When I was cultivating in the Snowcloud Academy, I became acquainted with the Crown Prince of Snowcloud Country. He was very good to me and would even send bodyguards to ensure my safety. Not only that, he’s willing to help me save Grandpa as well as Father. Thus, I’ve made a promise to him. As long as Grandpa and Father can truly be saved, I’m willing to become his woman.”

“Sister, why are you so foolish?” Qin Wentian sighed. It appeared

that Qin Yao made the sacrifice purely for the sake of Qin Chuan and Qin Wu, hoping to borrow the Snowcloud Country's strength.

“2nd Uncle is currently in a deadlock. As long as the Chu Country sends troops to pressure him, sooner or later, he will be defeated. I can't wait around for that to happen.” Qin Yao's heart was filled with sadness..

“Why did you come back to Chu Country?” Qin Wentian continued asking.

“I wish to meet with Grandpa and Father to see if there's any possibility of discussing terms with the Chu Country. However, today is also the first time i've met the 3rd prince.” Qin Yao stated.

“Miss Qin.” At this moment, several silhouettes appeared. They were none other than Qin Yao's body guards. Qin Wentian could feel the sharpness of the pressure they emit as they cast their gazes over, causing him to furrow his brows.

“Wentian, let's return. You stay out of this matter, got it?” Qin Yao lowered her head and mentioned this to him. Hearing this, Qin Wentian felt his heart grew heavy.

“This matter shouldn't be so simple as what Sister Yao described.” Qin Wentian silently stated. As both of them returned to the banquet, they discovered that the majority of the guests were discussing him.

Qin Wentian didn't mind. After all, he was just about to leave the banquet. However, at this moment, two silhouettes walking towards him from a distance away. The crowd's discussion grew silent as their gazes all shifted over to the two silhouettes.

The reason for their sudden pause was that the one of the figures' beauty was too sensational.

The moment she appeared, it was as though everything around her lost their splendor. She was the main lead, and her appearance caused several aristocrats to lose their manners. They fixated their stares on her, lost in her soul-stirring beauty.

"Where is she going?" Those in the crowd saw that Mo Qingcheng was walking towards them and couldn't help but feel their heartbeats quicken.

"How beautiful." Liu Yan involuntarily felt traces of a loss in her heart after looking at Liu Yue and Ye Zhan's stunned countenance.

AGM 079 – Mo Qingcheng’s Reminder

This person was none other than the woman who had the name of the number one beauty throughout the entirety Chu Country — Mo Qingcheng

Mo Qingcheng walked slowly, as the spectators held their gazes on her. Their countenances all underwent drastic changes as they realised that Mo Qingcheng seemed to be walking towards Mu Rou.

“Could there be any sort of relationship between Mu Rou and Mo Qingchen?” The crowd speculated in their hearts. After a few moments, Mo Qingcheng stood in front of Mu Rou. As they observed her from behind, the faces of the crowd were all filled with bewilderment, while Qin Wentian noticed that the gaze of Mo Qingcheng seemed to be directed at him.

As he looked left and right, checking to make sure that there were others near him, Qin Wentian became sure that Mo Qingcheng was currently looking at him.

“Qin Wentian.” Mo Qingcheng stated in a low voice. As the sound of her voice faded, the pupils of the crowd, all narrowed.

Qin Wentian? Mo Qingcheng, was here to look for Qin Wentian? Had they heard it wrongly?

Wasn’t it said that Qin Wentian had appeared here, using the status of a servant of Chu Ling? How did Mo Qingcheng know this person?

“Is there anything you need?” Qin Wentian inclined his head, and upon looking up at Mo Qingcheng, his heart involuntarily trembled.

Qingcheng’s features seemed to be a combination of those from all types of peerless beauties, tinged with a hint of shyness. Her eyes were limpid like autumn water; so perfect that she seemed akin to a portrait of beauty.

Qin Wentian naturally recognised her. For females such as Mo Qingcheng, no matter who it was, as long as they’d seen her before, it would be extremely tough to forget her.

“I have something to tell you, could you follow me somewhere?” Mo Qingcheng said lightly, causing the countenance of the crowd to freeze. Had they heard her wrongly? Mo Qingcheng actually wanted to associate with Qin Wentian alone?

In their opinion, even inside the Royal Capital of the Chu Country, there wasn’t a single male that was worthy of being shown such treatment by Mo Qingcheng.

“Yes.” Qin Wentian directly replied, as he’d already decided not to remain at this banquet. Standing up, he departed, as Mo Qingcheng slightly nodded towards Chu Tianjiao, before following the silhouette of Qin Wentian.

Seeing the two figures from behind, the entire banquet had gone quiet. Several of the guests had both coldness and murderous rage

reflected in their eyes.

“Qin Wentian.” Liu Yue’s countenance looked extremely chilly. Obviously, he was jealous. And the countenance of Liu Yan beside him, was fascinating to behold.

However, Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian had no idea what the crowd was currently thinking, for they had both already arrived at a remote location in the garden.

“I’m truly sorry regarding the matter from that day.” Mo Qingcheng bowed her head as she apologised. Looking at her expression, Qin Wentian found it hard to put any blame on her, and he inwardly cursed lightly — femme fatale. Luckily, he had an iron will. If it were some other youthful cultivator that was in his place, they would’ve already fallen head over heels, to a realm where logic could no longer reach them.

“We didn’t know each other at all, why are you apologising to me?” Qin Wentian’s heartbeat quickened, as he forcefully maintained his calm looking expression.

“Are you still blaming me? That day, I didn’t know that you were Qin Wentian. And when I saw you pursuing Orfon with the desire to kill him, I couldn’t help being mistaken about you.” Mo Qingcheng’s watery eyes were filled with traces of being wronged, as she looked towards Qin Wentian. This gaze of her was as if it had the capability to melt his heart.

At this moment, Nolan, who was beside them, was utterly

dumbstruck. Oh god, to think that our great Miss Mo would have such a girlish side to her.

As she rubbed her eyes, Nolan squinted again, as she was sure that she'd seen wrongly earlier.

“Forget it, it's nothing big anyway.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled as he shook his head, not daring to directly look into the eyes of Mo Qingcheng. He couldn't withstand this look of hers..... In any case, he wasn't someone petty. That day, he and Fan Le were really infuriated, but now that he thought about it, the mistake made by Mo Qingcheng was understandable as well. Not only that, when Orchon had said to kill them, Mo Qingcheng had stopped him and allowed them to go free.

However, the current Mo Qingcheng, and the Mo Qingcheng of that day had such a difference personalities that is almost seemed like they were two different people.

Qin Wentian didn't think that Mo Qingcheng had fallen for him at first sight, but he couldn't deduce any other reason.

“That's alright then.” Mo Qingcheng gently smiled.

“Are you here to attend the banquet being held by the 3rd Prince as well?” Qin Wentian suddenly asked.

“Yes. He indeed invited me, but I don’t really like places with crowds.” Mo Qingcheng smiled. No matter where she went, her beauty would draw a huge crowd.

These people who followed her around really had nothing better to do.

“Can I ask you one more question? The crown prince of Snowcloud Country, what type of person is he?” Qin Wentian, as if he’d suddenly thought of something, abruptly inquired. Mo Qingcheng had an extraordinary status, maybe she knew some things that others wouldn’t.

“The princes of the Snowcloud Country are even more numerous if they’re compared to our Chu Country. Their control is stable, and their Imperial Authority is absolute — even more so than the Chu Country. Not only that, but the Emperor of the Snowcloud Country, who’s still in the prime of his life, has already designated the position crown prince to one of his sons, despite him not being old. From this, one can see how elite the current prince of the Snowcloud Country is. The capability of the crown prince far exceeds that of the other princes — similar to Chu Tianjiao, as both of them are extremely capable.”

Mo Qingcheng continued, causing Qin Wentian’s countenance to stiffen. The more capable a person was, the harder it was to predict their thoughts. How could such a person muster such a large force just for Qin Yao, ignoring the relationship between both of their countries in order to help her with saving her family. The actions of the Crown Prince left Qin Wentian deeply worried.

“Oh, and there’s one more thing that I need to tell you.” Mo

Qingcheng gazed at Qin Wentian, as her expression turned severe.

“What’s the matter?” Qin Wentian asked.

“I’ve heard some rumours that the Crown Prince had wanted to enter into marriage with one of the princesses of our Chu Country.” Mo Qingcheng whispered, causing the heartbeat of Qin Wentian to lurch violently, and his expression to instantly grow unsightly.

“Is this news reliable?”

“There shouldn’t be any mistakes.” Mo Qingcheng nodded her head as she replied.

“Thank you.” Immense worry suddenly appeared in his heart. Since the Crown Prince of the Snowcloud Country currently wanted to marry one of the Chu Country’s princesses, how could he offend the Chu Country for the Qin Yao’s sake?

And the news about Qin Yao coming to the Chu Country, had it caused a huge commotion over in the Snowcloud Country? Maybe, there wasn’t anyone who knew about it.

Qin Yao was only the candidate for the Crown Prince’s wife on the surface. She didn’t even have any status or power over inside the Snowcloud Country, how would people know of her existence.

If that was the case, this meant that it was highly possible that

Qin Yao had been tricked!

Upon seeing the worried expression appear on Qin Wentian's visage, Mo Qingcheng couldn't help but sigh silently. She also knew that the reason Qin Yao had visited this time around, was in order to save Qin Wu and Qin Chuan from their imprisonment.

Initially, regarding these matters, she'd had no intentions of telling Qin Wentian. After all, his power was still insufficient to change anything, and she'd rather he cultivated safely inside the Emperor Star Academy.

But now, to think that she'd meet Qin Wentian here, and coincidentally it had seemed that he'd suspected it himself...it was because of this, that Mo Qingcheng had decided to reveal the facts that she knew, which allowed Qin Wentian to understand the full picture of the situation.

“Hey, are you guys treating me like empty air? When are you going to finish chatting?” Nolan had her hands on her hips; she hadn't been able to bear it any longer, and was glaring at Qin Wentian. This fellow, how could he be so lucky as to have the chance to socialise alone with Mo Qingcheng. This was a privilege that no other male could enjoyed

“Right, I'll take my leave first.” Qin Wentian nodded his head, causing Nolan to freeze as she blinked. Qin Wentian was actually the one that had proposed to leave first? This...caused her to be speechless.

“It would be better for you to return to the Emperor Star Academy first.” Mo Qingcheng looked at Qin Wentian as she advised, worried that Qin Wentian would be scalded by the boiling water from all the plotting and scheming of the royal clans. The matter of Qin Yao...he didn't have the qualifications to interfere yet.

Qin Wentian only nodded slightly towards Mo Qingcheng, as he turned to depart. His heart was filled with worry, as his brows tightly furrowed. It was obvious that he was worried for Qin Yao.

After the conversation with Mo Qingcheng, his heart grew heavier. Qin Yao was one of the few that were extremely important to him in his life. How could he not be worried.

“One last thing.” Mo Qingcheng suddenly opened her mouth and called out, causing Qin Wentian to turn his head. “That Liu Yan, you don't owe her anything.”

“Huh?” Qin Wentian was filled with bewilderment, but because his heart was filled with worries, he still nonchalantly nodded his head, and didn't inquire anymore about it.

“This fellow, is he a dumbo?” Nolan angrily stood to the side of Mo Qingcheng, as she looked from behind at Qin Wentian. There was a very small amount of people who'd still remain so calm after meeting Mo Qingcheng.

“How could he understand the meaning behind your words. You should've told him directly that you carried him on your back that

day.” Nolan cheekily grinned, causing Mo Qingcheng to roll her eyes at her.

Qin Wentian slowly ambled through the hunting grounds, his heart filled with heaviness. The news regarding the Crown Prince of the Snowcloud Country wanting to marry one of the princesses from the Chu Country remained firmly engrained in his mind — unable to be wiped away by him.

“I’m afraid that I’ll have to bring Sister Yao away from this place today.” Qin Wentian silently sighed. No wonder earlier, when he was talking with Qin Yao, that there had been guards that interrupted halfway. Maybe the guards weren’t for protection, but instead, were a form of supervision.

And at this moment, the earth suddenly shuddered. Qin Wentian turned his head towards the source of the commotion, and realised that in the distance there was a group of warhorses mounted by the guests of the banquet.

The time that he’d spent here should be quite lengthy, and the banquet must’ve ended. The members of the aristocratic clan had begun entering the Dark Forest, and had started hunting demonic beasts.

Slipping his hands into his robes, Qin Wentian withdrew the kirin-styled mask, and sprinted in the direction of the warhorses. His speed was so fast that it was like a hurricane had just passed by.

“They’re dispersing.” Qin Wentian, as he was sprinting over,

noticed that the crowd was dispersing into smaller groups as they entered the Dark Forest.

“Sister Yao’s group is over there.” Qin Wentian spotted Qin Yao, and began rushing over there covertly. The trees and foliage of the Dark Forest provided excellent camouflage.

“Yanaro?” At this moment, Qin Wentian witnessed that Yanaro hadn’t mounted a warhorse; instead, he was sneakily following Qin Yao from behind. Qin Wentian stiffened. What was this fellow trying to do?

Qin Wentian’s senses had always been sharp and acute. He’d already noticed Yanaro, but Yanaro had yet to notice him — akin to a hunter and it’s prey — as he followed silently behind Yanaro.

“Huh, he isn’t alone.” Qin Wentian suddenly felt as though his movements had been spotted by others, only to see that in front of him, several silhouettes had appeared and began to follow Qin Yao and her troops from behind.

“What’re they trying to do? If they want to make a move against Sister Yao, why would they use this method instead of directly finishing her off?” Qin Wentian knew that, if there really was an alliance between the Snowcloud and Chu Country, they would have a multitude of ways to deal with Qin Yao, and that there was no need for them to go through all of these troubles.

At this moment, Qin Wentian’s mind was whirling with countless possibilities, and he dashed ahead, only to see that his

movements had been discovered as there were two others sprinting towards him.

AGM 080 – Trap

Qin Wentian's speed was as fast as lightning as he explosively sprinted to the side of the forest, successfully losing his pursuers. The two men that were chasing him paused and decided to give up the chase. After all, there were still things waiting for their attention.

Currently, Yanaro dashed forwards with an incomparable speed. Waving his hands to those on the left and right side of him, he commanded, "Follow closely."

The people around him silently nodded their eyes, as they soundlessly tracked their prey.

As time passed, the crowd from the banquet earlier had all arrived in the hunting grounds, and crossed the boundary of the Dark Forest. Over here, the demonic Qi was much thicker, so there were many who slowed their speed as they ambled along.

Mu Rou had already dismounted and even killed a demonic beast, removing the demonic core with smooth, practiced movements. The young nobles hailing from the aristocratic clans had followed their elders and tempered themselves since a young age, so all of them were very familiar with hunting.

"Demonic Qi." At this moment, Mu Rou raised her head and cast her vision forward. Without hesitation, she turned and sprinted away. She had long learned of the differences regarding correlation of the density of the demonic Qi and the danger they represented.

This surge of demonic Qi that she sensed was something she could not win against. And thus, she decisively escaped in the opposite direction.

Just as she departed the area, a surge of blazing heat emanated forth and burned the nearby trees. Swiftly, a few lion-shaped demonic beasts appeared. The bodies of these beasts were all as tough as rocks and shone with an amber glow.

Astral Demonic Beast, Volcanic Lion.

These types of beasts were able to absorb the Astral Energy from flame-type constellations to aid in their maturation. Not only were they able to utilise the power of fire in their attacks, their bodies were extremely tough as well. A fearsome opponent indeed.

Not only that, Volcanic Lions were all vicious and bloodthirsty.

All of the lions were madly dashing towards Mu Rou. Mu Rou frantically sprinted forward, but she, too, soon discovered another surge of dense demonic Qi coming from the side.

“Chu Ling.” Mu Rou whispered as she saw a figure surrounded by a group of demonic wolves. Cutting a pathetic looking figure, Chu Ling was going to be overwhelmed at any moment.

Other than Chu Ling, there was another group of people clashing against other demonic beasts. They were none other than Qin Yao and her group from the Snowcloud Country.

Mu Rou quickly sprinted over to Chu Ling's rescue. Even before she arrived, she released her Wind-type hurricane Astral Soul, which explosively increasing her speed. In an instant, she arrived at Chu Ling's position and struck out with her palms. Her palm strikes contained the cutting power of the sharpest swords, imbued by the might of the wind, and they lacerated a demonic wolf that was on the verge of pouncing on Chu Ling.

"I don't need you to help me." Chu Ling icily replied, though she was still trembling with fear.

"There are stronger demonic beasts coming over here. Quickly, let's run." Mu Rou shouted. Because of the numerous wolves blocking their paths, she could already see the silhouette of the Volcanic Lions dashing over to their position.

"You want to harm me on purpose." Chu Ling's countenance went green as she saw the Volcanic Lions. The aura emitted by these lions indicated that they were at least 5th-level demonic beasts, equivalent to human cultivators at the middle tier Arterial Circulation, between the 4th and the 6th level.

A volley of flames were spat out by the lions towards Mu Rou. Mu Rou's countenance grew extremely unsightly as she drew deeply upon the power of her Wind-type Astral Soul, heightening her movement speed in order to dodge the balls of flames with her excellent footwork technique. The Volcanic Lions' defense was too strong for Mu Rou to contend against.

Just as the two of them was clashing frantically against the demonic beasts, Yanaro slowly strolled out, his face displaying a strange smile.

“Yanaro, why haven’t you started helping?” Chu Ling desperately called out when she saw Yanaro. Yanaro smiled coldly, “Do you want me to help you or Mu Rou?”

“Since Mu Rou hates you so much, you shouldn’t keep throwing your face away and sticking to her.” Chu Ling coldly replied, followed by a scream as the attack of a beast narrowly missed her.

Mu Rou’s countenance froze, previously, she always had an extremely close relation with Chu Ling, but to think because of Qin Wentian, Chu Ling hated her so much.

“Hehe.” Yanaro didn’t seem to be in a rush to intervene, as he stood there laughing, “What price will you pay me?”

“I will give you 50 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones.” Chu Ling grit her teeth and venomously cursed Yanaro in her heart. This bastard actually wanted to extort her in such a moment of crisis. Mu Rou remained silent and continued fighting against the demonic beasts.

At this moment, a blurry silhouette flashed past with inconceivable speed. That figure appeared beside Mu Rou and executed a fist technique amidst draconic roars, explosively smashing one of the Volcanic Lions.

“Boom!” A tyrannical force flung the Volcanic Lion into the air. From this, one could see how powerful the Dragon Subduing Fists was.

“It’s him!” Surprise shone on Mu Rou’s countenance as she looked at the kirin-masked figure in front of her. Although the clothes he was wearing had changed, looking at his figure as well as the Dragon Subduing Fists this person was executing, Mu Rou could confirm that her savior was none other than Qin Wentian.

Chu Ling also noticed the arrival of the kirin-masked figure. To think that he would appear here today, which of the academies was he from, exactly?

“Leave it to me.” Qin Wentian suppressed his voice to a baritone, as he executed his Garuda Movement Technique. Momentarily, Mu Rou only saw a series of after-images flashing by. The demonic wolves were no threat to him at all – even the Volcanic Lions, when Qin Wentian came into contact with any, their stone-like bodies would shatter, resulting in grievous injuries. The human-grade innate technique, the Dragon Subduing Fists, could unleash its full potential and was incomparably tyrannical in Qin Wentian’s hands, causing immense awe and shock to everyone witnessing it.

The energy used to power his innate techniques was derived from the Qi that he absorbed from the 5th Heavenly Layer before being compacted and condensed into Divine Energy. How could his attack not be domineering?

Yanaro’s expressions grew unsightly. It was him, the person who

hunted the members of his Knight's Association in the Dreamsky Forest!

In a blink of an eye, only a Volcanic Lion remained after Qin Wentian's barrage of powerful attacks. Its strength level was comparable a human at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation.

“Roar!” That Volcanic Lion howled in rage as it madly lunged towards Qin Wentian.

In that instant, Qin Wentian chose not to dodge but rather directly clashed against the Volcanic Lion.

“Die!” Qin Wentian spat out in a low voice. At the same time, he unleashed a tyrannical palm strike. His palm wavered slightly in the air, containing a harmony of the dual concepts of hardness and softness. Possessing terrifying might, it landed on the head of the Volcanic Lion. Cracking sounds echoed out as the skull of the Volcanic Lion crumbled. It slumped to the ground, forever silenced.

“How strong...” Chu Ling's heart trembled. The aura this man was exuding indicated that he was at the 5th level of Arterial Circulation. To think that his martial prowess at such a high level, far surpassing even cultivators at the 6th level.

As for Yanaro, his eyes flickered with a sharp glint of light. That

palm strike earlier seemed to have originated from the Thousand Hands Imprint, but then again, he couldn't be sure.

Mu Rou was calmer in comparison. After sparring with Qin Wentian for many days, she knew that Qin Wentian had extraordinary combat ability. Her body flickered into motion as she killed the demonic wolves surrounding Chu Ling, and very swiftly, the battlefield was emptied of demon beasts.

On the other side, Qin Yao and her group were still battling, but from the looks of it, Qin Yao didn't appear to be in any danger.

“Boom!” At this moment, a surge of domineering sword intent gushed forth from Yanaro's body. Taking a step forwards, his killing intent soared as he gazed at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian was not caught unaware. Turning his body and seeing Yanaro's actions, an extremely chilly light flickered in his eyes.

“Buzz.” Yanaro dashed over. As he moved, the sword Qi he was emitting got increasingly saturated. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the sword Qi he released was currently akin to a brutal storm of swords.

“Boom!” The earth shattered under Qin Wentian's feet, as he exploded forth towards Yanaro. The Divine Energy in his body was frenziedly circulating through his five circular arterial pathways, emitting a sound similar to the waves of the ocean.

“Chichi.....” Yanaro’s finger stabbed forth, and the energy he released transformed into a sharp sword that flew towards Qin Wentian.

However, not only did Qin Wentian not slow down, he further increased his speed. Just as the sword was about to pierce his body, he twisted his body to the side and continued dashing forwards.

“Hmph.” Yanaro coldly laughed, as he waved his hand. This time, five swords were formed from the sword energy released by his five fingers. The released sword Qi was so strong that it seemed capable of lacerating everything.

But at the same moment, the Divine Energy gushing in Qin Wentian’s body had reached a crescendo. Channeling the power to his palms, Qin Wentian send out a palm strike towards Yanaro. This palm strike was so strong that it felt capable of toppling mountains and overturning the seas.

As their attacks collided, Qin Wentian’s palm imprint was lacerated mercilessly. Qin Wentian rapidly retreated while Yanaro was forced backwards by the impact as well. Looking again at Qin Wentian, the killing intent in Yanaro’s eyes got even stronger.

Qin Wentian lowered his head as he gaze at his robes. The terrifying sword energies had torn apart his robes, leaving a huge hole behind. If it weren’t for him decisively retreating, he would be the one injured by the sword Qi. After all, Yanaro was a cultivator at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, so it wasn’t so easy to defeat him.

At this moment, several figures stepped forth. Qin Wentian contemplated his surroundings as his body flickered backwards. While he was retreating, he cast a glance over at Qin Yao's side. They had already concluded their battle and were continuing their advance.

"No....." At this moment, a voice filled with pain screamed out, causing Qin Wentian to stiffen. This voice belonged to Qin Yao.

Disregarding everything, Qin Wentian's body flickered, his speed reaching its limit. When he saw what was happening, his body involuntarily trembled violently.

In his field of vision, he could see a black, immense stronghold that emitted a sinister feeling. That deep and dark block, created from darksteel, gave people an extremely depressing feeling when they gazed upon it.

Just outside of the black stronghold, there was a training ground surrounding it. In the middle of the drill ground, a group of terrifying beasts were besieging a middle-aged figure. Traces of bloody wounds covered the body of the middle-aged figure, and his hair fluttered wildly in the wind. Despite the state of his body, there was a resolute, undying will that could be seen in the depths of his eyes.

"Father." Qin Yao hoarsely sobbed.

"Father." Qin Wentian deeply breathed, fighting to remain calm.

The reason why Yanaro followed Qin Yao all the way was for this moment? To see Qin Yao witness the cruel sight of their father getting torn apart?

Was this scenario purposely prepared for Qin Yao?

Chu Tianjiao, what was his purpose in doing so?

Yanaro, Chu Ling, Mu Rou and the rest of them all arrived at the surroundings near the black stronghold.

“The legendary black stronghold.” Mu Rou whispered. The black stronghold was a place where prisoners on death-row were detained. It was said to be situated somewhere in the Dark Forest, and once you were imprisoned, it would be tough to escape even if one were given wings.

That middle aged figure were none other than the father of Qin Wentian and Qin Yao – Qin Chuan.

Thinking of this, Mu Rou hurried to Qin Wentian’s side and warned in a low voice, “The black stronghold is famed for its airtight security. It only allows people to enter but not to exit. Now that Qin Chuan is outside of it, be careful, this may be a trap.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled. So, it turned out that Mu Rou had known of his identity.

Obviously this was a trap, but why did Chu Tianjiao want to set such a trap?

Although he didn't understand, an unquenchable raging flame of fury had already started burning in his heart.

AGM 081 – Clearing Misunderstandings

Qin Chuan's expression underwent a drastic change after she noticed Qin Yao, and when she frantically sprinted over, he loudly berated, "Qin Yao, don't worry about me."

Qin Yao's countenance froze as her face turned bloodlessly pale. Her eyes were filled with tears, "Father, how can I ever ignore you?"

As she spoke, she turned her body and cast her gaze upon Yanaro and others from the Chu Country. "Where is Chu Tianjiao? Why is he doing this?"

Chu Tianjiao didn't appear, and instead, Yanaro walked forwards, "Qin Yao, this man is a serious felon from our Chu Country. This matter has nothing to do with you, so you are not allowed to interfere."

"Good, good. How malevolent." Qin Yao's expression turned to ice. She looked towards her guards from the Snowcloud Country. "I want to save that man."

Only to see one of them stepping forth in reply, "This place is the Chu Country, and that man is a felon of the Chu Country. Not only that, the stronger cultivators from our country are not even here."

Only now did Qin Yao understand. Using the banquet and the subsequent beast hunt as an excuse, while sending people to slyly direct her here. Seems like this was all planned by Chu Tianjiao.

“This is none of your business.” Qin Yao icily replied before turning and continuing to dash towards Qin Chuan.

“Qin Yao, you must clearly understand this: they have the authority to kill anyone who attempts to break into the Black Stronghold, regardless of background.” Qin Chuan called out in rage, “Qin Yao, LEAVE NOW.”

Seeing her father in such danger, how could Qin Yao stomach these words? She dashed straight into the drill ground of the Black Stronghold, causing Yanaro to laugh coldly, “Qin Yao, you are courting death.”

As the sound of his voice faded, several silhouettes appeared and encircled the drill ground, preparing to annihilate everyone within.

Other than that, Ye Zhan, Liu Yue, and the rest of the banquet guests had all arrived here by now. In their hearts, there was only shock. So, this was the plan orchestrated by the 3rd Prince. The Black Stronghold was located in a forbidden area, so if it weren't for someone leading the way, no one would be able to find it that easily.

Qin Yao actually chose to dash right into the middle of the drill ground. Wasn't this equivalent to her willingly jumping into the trap? Despite the injuries Qin Chuan sustained, he was still able to manifest the martial prowess of someone at the 5th or 6th level of Arterial Circulation, stronger than Qin Yao. Yanaro and the rest

eyed them just like a tiger watching its prey. As if they were watching an entertaining show.

They did not seem to be in a hurry to deal with Qin Chuan and Qin Yao. Instead, they were waiting for something.

Qin Wentian stepped forth, but as he prepared to dash forward, he found himself being pulled by Mu Rou. Mu Rou whispered, “Qin Yao has already fallen into their trap. You mustn’t fall into it as well.”

If Qin Wentian intervened now, then Yanaro and the rest would have a reason to deal with him.

His black eyes stared at the two silhouettes standing in the middle of the drill ground before turning back Mu Rou’s eyes. He intoned in a low voice, “I’m not fit to be a human if I stay my hand while seeing my father in such a state.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian’s body erupted into motion. Under the flabbergasted gaze of the crowd, he entered the drill ground. His actions left Mu Rou gasping in shock. Truly, the men of Qin Clan had wills as strong as iron.

“Huh?” Seeing Qin Wentian’s involvement, the crowd was all stunned. Even Qin Chuan and Qin Yao were bewildered.

Swiftly after, a cold glint of laughter flickered in Yanaro’s eyes. This kirin-masked figure was courting his own death.

“Friend, this matter has nothing to do with you. Leave quickly.” Qin Chuan said to Qin Wentian as he killed another of the ferocious demonic beasts. However, Qin Wentian didn’t reply with words. Executing his footwork, he arrived in front of another demonic beast and explosively struck out a powerful blow. The shock from the impact vibrated the beast to death.

At this moment, the demonic beasts were gradually getting wiped out, while outside of the drill ground, many soldiers directly facing them with bows in their hands.

“Now, do you think you can still escape?” Yanaro laughed coldly, as his group of people lunged towards the three members of the Qin Clan.

He had exchanged blows twice with this kirin-masked figure, yet was unable to claim that he was the victor. To Yanaro, this was a humiliation.

Yanaro’s fiercely keen Sword Qi exploded forth . His body dashed forwards as he extended a finger that pierced through the air towards Qin Wentian, unleashing the full potential of his innate technique.

Qin Wentian did not bother to mask his technique any longer. Stepping out with force, the energy in his body surged wildly as the Revolving Imprint erupted forth.

“Kill!” Yanaro roared with rage. His astral soul exploded with power. This finger technique that he was currently using was one of his ultimate moves. However, Qin Wentian’s Revolving Sea Imprint resembled the waves from a tsunami, covering everything. The terrifying backlash caused by the impact blew their clothes into pieces.

Sounds of cracking occurred. The mask on Qin Wentian’s face was slashed apart by the remnant Sword Qi, revealing his true features.

His good looks were tinged with a slight dash of something demonic, and his eyes were filled with cold-blooded killing intent.

“Qin Wentian.” Yanaro spat out the words, his voice filled with bloodlust. He would never have guessed that the person he had fought to a draw was the Qin Wentian he had humiliated a few months before.

Members of the aristocratic clans all had frozen looks upon their faces. Earlier, the target of their ridicule was actually the rumored tyrannical kirin-masked figure from the Emperor Star Academy – Qin Wentian!

Chu Ling’s countenance grew extremely ugly to behold. Before this, she was filled with contempt towards Qin Wentian. To think that now, Qin Wentian’s power was so much stronger than her, giving rise to an uncomfortable feeling in her heart.

“He has become so strong.” Liu Yan murmured, as a slight

depressing emotion appeared in her heart.

“Wentian.” An ambivalence of worry and joy surfaced in his heart as Qin Chuan realised that the masked figure was none other than Qin Wentian. Joy because Qin Wentian had only cultivated for a year and already attained such a high level of martial prowess.

“Wentian, why are you here.” Qin Yao countenance went bloodlessly pale. She had not expected Qin Wentian to appear in this place.

Qin Wentian turned his head and smiled at the two of them. The previous cold look of killing intent was replaced by a look of warm gentleness and laughter. “Father, Sister.”

“WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE!!! Quickly, leave immediately!” Qin Chuan roared with anger, causing Qin Wentian’s expression to freeze.

“There’s no need to leave. Kill!” Yanaro commanded, and in response, a row of powerful cultivators lunged towards them. Qin Wentian once again clashed against Yanaro, the terrifying Sword Qi versus the tyrannical Palm Imprints madly striking against each other.

“Liu Yue, go kill him. This could be considered as you gaining credit to help pave the road to a glorious future.” Ye Zhan exclaimed. Liu Yue stiffened as he cast a glance at Ye Zhan before slowly nodding his head. Brandishing a Sword-type Divine

Weapon, he rushed forwards. Seeing this, Liu Yan felt extremely shocked in her heart, giving her an incomparably gentle and weak appearance. She cast a deep glance at Qin Wentian, but words failed to escape her throat.

Qin Chuan was fighting against an opponent as well. He was very clear that if those in the Black Stronghold wanted their lives, it would have been accomplished easily, and yet they chose to hold back. How laughable.

“Wentian, your strength has already grown to such a stage.” Qin Chuan’s body was stained with dirt. The eyes he used to glance at Qin Wentian’s back were filled with moisture.”

He, Qin Chuan, had such a son and daughter. What else did he lack? He could only lament silently in his heart and accept the harsh reality of imperial authority.

During the grand battle between Yanaro and Qin Wentian, the two were surrounded by a group of other cultivators who were waiting for their opportunity to deal with Qin Wentian.

At this moment, the two of them clashed yet again, a sharp sword against a palm imprint. The flurry exchange of blows obviously exhausted a large amount of their strength.

“Chance.” Liu Yue and the rest silently exclaimed. Since Qin Wentian had delivered himself to their doorsteps. They would have to kill him.

Looking at the surrounding cultivators unleashing their attacks, Qin Wentian roared in anger, “Scram!”

He spat from his mouth a terrifyingly strong ball of Divine Energy that transformed into a manifestation of a palm imprint, explosively blasting away one of the surrounding cultivators.

At the same time, his sharp senses had already warned him of Liu Yue’s ambush. His hand transformed into a draconic claw. He swung his claw, locking down Liu Yue’s sharp sword. However, at the same instance, Yanaro’s Sword Qi managed to pierce through his palm imprint, and leave a wound behind his body. Despite scoring blood, the remnants of the energies contained within palm imprint caused Yanaro’s body to be flung aside, as the Qi and blood in his body roiled about chaotically. The power of Qin Wentian’s palm strike couldn’t be belittled.

Qin Wentian ignored the bleeding wound on his body and shifted his gaze onto Liu Yue. His claw was still locking down on Liu Yue’s sharp sword.

Liu Yue cast a glance at his surroundings in a panic and discovered that the others had all retreated, causing his countenance to stiffen. Looking at Qin Wentian, he stated, “Qin Wentian, for my sister’s future I was forced to do this. Since you are going to die here anyway, why not help me one last time and die by my hands?”

Qin Wentian’s cold gaze was directed right into Liu Yue’s eyes. Flexing his muscle, the Liu Yue’s Sword-type Divine Weapon was wrenched from his hands. “On the account of Liu Yan previously

saving my life, I won't kill you today. Scram."

Liu Yue backed away slowly, but from his eyes, it could be seen that he still harboured thoughts of dealing with Qin Wentian.

"You stupid fool!" In the distance, two graceful silhouettes sprinted over. They were none other than Mo Qingcheng and Nolan.

"Qin Wentian, didn't Mo Qingcheng already told you that you don't owe Liu Yan anything? Why are you such a fool? That day in the forest outside Sky Harmony City, it was Qingcheng who had saved you. She was the one who fed you a medicinal pill, boiled medicine for you and even carried you on her back. As we saw Liu Yan and her friends appearing, we decided to take our leave. They were not the ones that saved you; they were merely passer-bys who appeared after you awakened!"

"Idiot."

Nolan was extremely infuriated. This fellow...even when a person like Liu Yue wanted to kill him, he still remembered the 'gratitude' he had towards Liu Yan. Stupid. Fool.

Qin Wentian's heart trembled as he stared at Mo Qingcheng's beautiful countenance.

Mo Qingcheng stood there. Her beautiful features were just as enchanting as ever, as she lightly nodded her head. "It was the

snowy puppy that brought me to look for you. That's the reason why it recognised me."

Qin Wentian thought about the day when he had first entered the Royal Capital. Indeed, during the first time he saw Mo Qingcheng, Little Rascal did scamper into the carriage where she was sitting in.

His gaze involuntarily shifted in Liu Yan's direction. "So, you were not the one who saved me in the forest."

Liu Yan had a blank expression on her face. Her brother always told her that Qin Wentian liked her. She had never knew that it was all because Qin Wentian wanted to repay her 'gratitude'. That day, she had indeed not been Qin Wentian's savior, but rather just a passer-by.

Hearing the conversation between Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian, only now did she realize that everything had been a misunderstanding.

Qin Wentian understood everything after seeing the look on Liu Yan's face,

On his face, a trace of laughter could be seen. That laughter, however, sounded slightly demonic.

"So, the relationship between us were merely that of a chance meeting." Qin Wentian exclaimed.

After saying this, he glanced at Liu Yue, sarcasm heavily painting his voice. “To think that I once saved both of your lives in the Dark Forest. I have no authority to direct your lives, nor which social circle you chose to join. After all, we are merely strangers. But I truly don’t understand how could you be so shameless. You actually still wanted me to allow you to kill me? How ridiculous.”

When the sound his voice faded, Qin Wentian’s killing intent soared to the heavens. As he stepped forward, Liu Yue’s countenance turned extremely unsightly as terror flashed across his face.

AGM 082 – A Real Man

Liu Yue stepped backwards as his countenance turned pale white, and hysterically called out, “Qin Wentian, on account of Liu Yan, let’s wipe the slate clean.”

Qin Wentian inclined his head and cast a glance towards Liu Yan, before speaking to Liu Yue with sarcasm in his tone, “Although this was a misunderstanding, it was a beautiful one. We could’ve still been friends. What a pity that you wanted to kill me; as for Liu Yan, I, don’t owe her anything.”

After which, Qin Wentian’s killing intent surged even higher. Not only did he not owe Liu Yan anything, he’d even saved her life.

Liu Yan looked in Qin Wentian’s direction, and felt tears bubbling up in her eyes. She understood that Qin Wentian wasn’t wrong, that it was her who owed a debt to Qin Wentian. How laughable it was that, when her brother, Liu Yue, told her that Qin Wentian liked her, she’d actually believed it, and had even tried to used the relationship between them at that point, to allow her brother to deal with Qin Wentian.

“Die.” Qin Wentian unleashed an imprint that blasted towards Liu Yue. Liu Yue lifted his hands to block, but the overwhelming power contained within wasn’t something that Liu Yue could withstand. Thus, he died from only a single strike.

“No.....” Liu Yan felt her knees go weak, and fell to the ground, her eyes beginning to cloud with tears, after which she closed her

eyes — it was as if she didn't want to see the reality that had played out in front of her.

Qin Wentian's gaze didn't contain any sympathy when he glanced at Liu Yan. Earlier, when Liu Yue had wanted to kill him, she hadn't even uttered a word. Maybe her personality wasn't so bad, but her attitude was just too disappointing. He was the one that had saved her life!

“Excellent.” At this moment, a voice drifted over from in the distance. The crowd cast their gaze over in the direction of the voice, only to see both the 3rd Prince, Chu Tianjiao, and Luo Qianqiu, riding their horses in their direction. Atop their horses, they calmly looked down at Qin Wentian. It was as if everything that'd happened simply wasn't capable of perturbing them, even in the slightest.

“Qin Wentian, for your attempt to save the prisoner Qin Chuan, the sentence is death. Even if you're a student of the Emperor Star Academy, the ending will still be the same.” Chu Tianjiao calmly spoke, condemning Qin Wentian to death with a single sentence.

As the sound of his voice began to fade, the soldiers all nocked arrows and were aiming at them. In such a situation, even if they had wings, it would still be impossible for them to escape.

“Yao`er, Wentian, my silly children.” Qin Chuan felt extremely guilty in his heart. His son and daughter had had a bright future ahead of them, but all of that was going to be buried here today.

“Boom, boom...” Tremors shook the earth violently, and a surge of demonic Qi was able to be felt in the air, causing the crowd’s countenance to stiffen.

Qin Chuan froze too, as his gaze flickered..

Chu Tianjiao, who was mounted atop a war horse, still maintained an unperturbed expression. Not only that, but the faint trace of a smile could be seen upon his lips as he silently whispered, “Finally, it happened. I’ve been waiting for a long time.”

The doors of the Black Stronghold opened, and a regiment of troops appeared. They were all fully equipped in armor, and exhibited an imposing aura. As they appeared, Chu Tianjiao commanded, “Detain the three of them. I want them alive.”

“Yes my lord.” The troops advanced in Qin Wentian’s direction.

On the other side of them, a group of demonic beasts were madly sprinting over, and had appeared in their field of vision. A flame of hope appeared in Qin Chuan’s heart, and he turned to Qin Wentian and Qin Yao, “Quickly, escape during the chaos. Ignore me, they wouldn’t dare to kill me.”

After which, Qin Chuan stepped out and faced the advancing troops alone, before raising his palms and placing them atop his Tianling Acupoint.

“Take one more step forward, and I’ll end my own life.” Qin Chuan hollered. His voice echoed out imposingly, causing the troops to slow their advancement.

Casting his gaze at Chu Tianjiao, he icily continued, “As a man of my word, I will do as I’ve said.”

Qin Chuan was gambling.

During these past few days, Chu Tianjiao had been making use of him — almost as though Chu Tianjiao wanted to draw something out. But what it exactly it was, even Qin Chuan had no idea. It was as if Qin Chuan and Qin Wu were merely a game piece on a board.

Qin Chuan was betting that Chu Tianjiao wouldn’t dare allow him to die.

And it was as he expected: the troops halted their movements upon seeing Chu Tianjiao waving his hands. At this moment, the violent demonic beasts rushed right into the drilling grounds of the Black Stronghold.

The soldiers that were equipped with bows, immediately began to fire their arrows at the demonic beasts, as they engaged in a battle of carnage.

Qin Chuan whispered to Qin Wentian and Qin Yao, “Quickly prepare yourselves. Escape immediately once there’s a chance.”

“Father.” Qin Yao moaned, as tears slid down her face. How could she bear to do what he was asking, this was her Father!

Qin Wentian looked to Qin Chuan, “Father if you want to leave, then we’ll leave together.”

“If you still don’t go, I’ll die right now, in front of you.” Qin Chuan raised his palms, causing the Qin Wentian’s expression to turn extremely ugly, and his body began to tremble violently.

“Father!” Qin Yao shouted, only to have Qin Wentian pull her along, and madly sprint to the side.

Mo Qingcheng inclined her head and looked into the air, feeling nervousness in her heart. Why hadn’t it appeared yet?

“Qianqiu, do me a favor.” Chu Tianjiao muttered in a low tone to Luo Qianqiu, causing Luo Qianqiu to lightly nod his head, showing that he understood Chu Tianjiao’s meaning. Tightening his legs on his warhorse, his mount galloped in the direction of Qin Wentian and Qin Yao.

Besides Luo Qianqiu, at the same time, there was also another group of silhouettes that were under the authority of Luo Qianqiu and that were chasing after Qin Wentian and Qin Yao. This group of people appeared to be entirely youngsters, but the aura that they emitted was incredibly cold.

Mo Qingcheng stepped forth, only to hear Chu Tianjiao state,

“Qingcheng, I don’t wish to do anything to you.”

After the sound of his voice faded, Mo Qingcheng slowed her steps as she sighed in her heart. She was very clear that if Chu Tianjiao were to intervene, it would be completely impossible for her to render any help to Qin Wentian.

“Chu Tianjiao, why do you have to be so ruthless?” Mo Qingcheng cast a glance at Chu Tianjiao as she inquired.

“I know that your Mo Clan and Qin Wu had a deep relationship in the past. However, that was eons ago. The Qin Clan now is no longer the Qin Clan of the past; they’ve already degenerated. The Mo Clan should stay out of this. Qingcheng, you should mind your own business.” Chu Tianjiao looked directly at Mo Qingcheng and replied.

“Why would the Chu Clan be so ruthless?” Mo Qingcheng sighed, as she cast her gaze far away into the horizon, staring towards the direction in which Qin Wentian had escaped to. She clearly knew Luo Qianqiu’s status. In the Chu Country, Luo Qianqiu was something akin to a taboo existence. Even The Royal Clan had to maintain a good relationship with him, fearing that they might anger him. The Emperor Star Academy had to allow him to enroll there as well.

Not only that, but Luo Qianqiu’s martial prowess was exceptionally powerful. She could only wish Qin Wentian good luck. Even if she wanted to intervene, she had no power to be able to do so.

Qin Wentian pulled Qin Yao along as he madly sprinted into the Dark Forest, executing his Garuda Movement Technique to its absolute limit. He'd discovered that the aura of the person that was pursuing him was incredibly strong, and had speed that didn't lose out to the him that was pulling Qin Yao along.

"Sister, you leave first." Qin Wentian gazed at Qin Yao as he spoke.

"No." Qin Yao vehemently rejected.

"If we stay together, it'll be hard for us to escape. If you leave, I'll have a chance." Qin Wentian looked at Qin Yao, and continued, "Your speed is too slow, and will burden me."

After hearing Qin Wentian's words, Qin Yao couldn't help but feel sadness in her heart. She knew that Qin Wentian was intentionally angering her, and that even though his approach was crude, his words were true.

"Wentian, Father has already been imprisoned. You mustn't land in their hands." Qin Yao's beautiful eyes were filled with tears as she stared at Qin Wentian who was beside her.

"Don't worry sister, I still have to take care of you." Qin Wentian smiled, and Qin Yao nodded her head. "I'll wait for you."

As the sound of her voice faded, Qin Wentian relinquished his

hold on her, before turning his body around.

“Leave quickly.” Qin Wentian berated. Qin Yao wiped away the tears in her eyes and quickly bore the pain in her heart, as she continued to sprint forward.

After Qin Yao left, a gentle smile could be seen on Qin Wentian’s face. But, as he shifted his gaze to cover the silhouettes of his pursuers, the coldness in his eyes intensified and reached the limit. Clutched in his hand, was the 3rd grade Divine Weapon — the Goldem sword.

When the pursuers arrived and saw that Qin Wentian was alone, they attempted to split up and continue the chase, only to see Qin Wentian step forwards, brandishing the Goldem sword as he roared in rage, “Whoever dares to take a step forward will receive the full power of this 3rd grade Divine Weapon.”

As the sound of his voice faded, he channeled his Astral Energy into the Goldem sword, causing a terrifying sword Qi to emerge. His pursuers freezed in their steps.

“This is a 3rd-grade Divine Weapon granted to me by an Elder of the Emperor Star Academy. If you want to die, come at me.” Qin Wentian’s lips were curled into an extremely cold smile. Upon sensing the terrifying Sword Qi that was being emitted from the Goldem Sword, the pupils of his pursuers narrowed. Based on the talent that Qin Wentian had shown in the academy, his words from just now had an extremely high probability of being real.

“Yuan Chen, kill him.” Luo Qianqiu arrived and coldly commanded. The next moment, all of the pursuers aura’s exploded forth as one, and an overwhelming pressure congealed in the air, before. The pressure proceeded to pushed against Qin Wentian, seeking to destroy him where he stood.

The Divine Energy in Qin Wentian’s body gushed as he sent out a Revolving Sea Imprint. The domineering energies within the palm imprint collided with the combined pressure sent out by the group of pursuers. The resulting recoil forced Qin Wentian backwards, and his blood and Qi roiled in his body chaotically. Despite this, the Goldem Sword that was tightly clutched in his hands never wavered. He had to buy time for Qin Yao to escape.

“Kill.” The groups of pursuers advanced and continued to force Qin Wentian back step by step. After several moments, Qin Wentian involuntarily spat out fresh blood, as his countenance became extremely pale. However, the resolution in his eyes only grew stronger and stronger — he was one man facing a myriad of men.

“Today, I couldn’t protect Father. If I even allowed Sister Yao to fall in danger, I have no right to call myself a man.” Qin Wentian’s countenance were icy cold. He sent out a torrent of Revolving Palm Imprints, so numerous in number that they covered the skies, destroying the combined pressure. However, this was only enough to buy him a short moment. After some moments, Qin Wentian was already unsure of how many mouthful of fresh blood he spat out.

Within his body, his pool of Astral Energy was almost dried up.

The group of pursuers couldn't help but to silently praise Qin Wentian's tenacity.

Very quickly, the pursuers split themselves up. Although Qin Wentian was fighting with his life on the line, they would still need a batch of people to chase after Qin Yao.

But at this very moment, Qin Wentian unleashed a roar of rage, as his body sprinted forwards, brandishing the Goldem Sword. He channeled the last dregs of his energy into the Divine Weapon.

The earth trembled as Qin Wentian exploded forth into motion. His movements were incredibly swift, and he shortened the distance between him and the pursuers before appearing in front of them. In that instant, he waved the Goldem Sword and triggered the explosive release of the monstrous sword lights, transforming the whole sky into a rain of swords.

But also in the same instant, Qin Wentian's abrupt release of terrifying sword lights flung his body backwards for quite a distance, and he was slammed heavily onto the ground from the impact. Spitting out yet another mouthful of blood, he stared grimly at the rain of swords that so easily, severed the group of pursuers from their lives.

Just as Ren Qianxing had said, the Goldem Sword was a one-time use Divine Weapon. Not only was its might incredibly powerful, its area of effect had an immense radius as well. Countless lives were so easily extinguished with a mere swing of the sword.

TN Note: Tianling Acupoint = located at the top of his head

AGM 083 – I Can't Die Here

Qin Wentian sat on the ground, disregarding the chaotic flows meandering around in his body. Pulling out his silver needles, he inserted the needles into acupoints around his entire body.

In an instant, the blood in his body surged and seethed from his execution of the 12 Connecting Styles of Life Needles Art, unlocking the fetters of his Bloodline Limit. At the same time, he equipped on his Divine Gloves, which had an imprint inscribed on it using Divine Energy.

“Rumble!” A swift leg swept forwards. Shadows flickering behind it seemed to howl in protest due to the speed, seeking to destroy Qin Wentian, who was sitting on the ground. Since this person was able to remain alive despite the rain of swords summoned by the Golden sword, naturally, he would have some capabilities. The strength of his leg was extremely terrifying, and the speed of his attack was also incredibly swift. No wonder this person was among the first who had managed to escape from the area of effect of his previous attack.

“Boom!” Qin Wentian pushed out with his palm, grabbing hold of the leg that had the power to easily crumble huge boulders. As the attacker lost his balance, his countenance underwent a drastic change. His bloodshot eyes were glaring straight at Qin Wentian, akin to the gaze of a ferocious beast.

A Heavenly Astral Hammer materialized in Qin Wentian's left hand, and with it, he abruptly chopped towards the attacker as a blood-curdling screech echoed out.

At the same time, as Qin Wentian stood up with an incredibly domineering aura exuded from his body, he executed the Perfect level of the Garuda Movement Technique and sprinted in the direction of the two pursuers who were chasing after Qin Yao. The ground trembled from the force of his steps. In merely an instant, he had already caught up. Exploding forth with two Diamond Imprints containing overwhelming strength, he easily killed the two pursuers.

Luo Qianqiu sat atop of his warhorse, personally witnessing everything that happened. A faint trace of disturbance could be seen in his expressions. Never had he thought that Qin Wentian would actually use a secret technique to forcibly control his Bloodline Limit, and in addition to the augmenting effect by his glove-type Divine Weapon, Qin Wentian's martial prowess would be so high. But still, in his eyes, this was nothing but an ant struggling for its survival.

“Hmm?” At this moment, Luo Qianqiu raised his head to gaze in a direction in the far off distance. He seemed to have instinctively sensed a surge of terrifying demonic Qi coming his way. The skies over there seemed to be covered over by a layer of haze.

“Seems like the large commotion today actually even attracted waves of demonic beasts.” Luo Qianqiu commented as he contemplated the thick demonic Qi that covered the sun and clouds. After doing so, he continued, “There's no need to chase after Qin Yao anymore.”

His lackeys also saw the surge of demonic Qi rushing over.

Nodding their heads,, they glanced collectively in Qin Wentian's direction Now, killing Qin Wentian had become their first priority.

Luo Qianqiu dismounted, then exploded forth in motion. Instantly, Qin Wentian sensed an overwhelming sense of danger rushing over him.

Luo Qianqiu's footwork appeared extremely slow, yet it seemed that every step he took was capable of propelling him a long distance. His whole body was crackling with lightning energy, his appearance akin to a God of Lightning.

“Boom.” The ground trembled violently as Luo Qianqiu landed in front of Qin Wentian. Enveloped by a boundless amount of lightning, his fist lights exploded forth. The brilliance of the fist lights was so blinding that the onlookers found it impossible to keep their eyes open.

With his feet planted on the ground, the energy in Qin Wentian's body gushed forth in waves, capable of toppling mountains and overturning seas, so powerful that even the heavens and earth were shrieking.

The oncoming Luo Qianqiu's feet were as steady as Mount Tai. His fist trembled three times, launching three rays of lightning-imbued fist lights that landed on Qin Wentian's body. Qin Wentian only felt wounds appearing on his body, as the power of the lightning currents rampaged through him, making it seem as though his whole body was going to break apart.

“How powerful.” The onlookers couldn’t help but tremble in their hearts. This was Luo Qianqiu. He was indeed the son of his father, who had previously rampaged through the entire Chu Country, overturning the skies and earth.

Qin Wentian also felt the full brunt of the might of Luo Qianqiu’s innate technique. Roaring in anger, all the Divine Energy that he had stored up in his Divine Gloves erupted simultaneously. In that instant, he sent out a palm, its power akin to torrential waves of devastation, capable of devouring even the heavens and earth. Luo Qianqiu’s countenance froze, and in an attempt to defend against the attack, he released his Lightning Revenant Astral Soul.

Qin Wentian felt that his entire body had gone numb. Despite adjusting the remaining Divine Energy in his body to brace himself against the impact, he was still flung backwards.

At the same time, Luo Qianqiu’s feet glided across the surface of the earth, as the impact forced him to retreat several steps. Flabbergasted, he involuntarily cast a glance at the Divine Glove equipped on Qin Wentian’s palms.

Luo Qianqiu could feel the demonic Qi grow denser and denser. Not only that, he could already see the first wave of demonic beasts sprinting over. Although he was unwilling, he gave a stern command: “Retreat!”

As the sound of his voice faded, those who were chasing after Qin Wentian all retreated.

However, Luo Qianqiu once again dashed towards Qin Wentian.

He would kill Qin Wentian before he retreated.

Upon noticing Luo Qianqiu's intent, Qin Wentian forced himself to swallow the mouthful of fresh blood which he almost spat out as the entirety of the Divine Energy in his body frenziedly circulated. Luo Qianqiu's strength was too overwhelming, and the disparity between their levels of cultivation was too far apart. Even more, Luo Qianqiu was currently at the peak of the 7th level of Arterial Circulation.

Although Qin Wentian was able to handle someone like Yanaro, Luo Qianqiu was a different ball game altogether.

"Die in peace." Luo Qianqiu landed in front of Qin Wentian. As Qin Wentian struck out with his palms, he only felt that a tremendous amount of lightning energy was gushing towards him, leaving him with no way to defend.

Gathering his remaining energy, Qin Wentian forced out a palm. But even then, he could feel that his palm imprints were unceasingly torn to shreds by the lightning energy, and after the force of his attacks was forcibly dissipated, the remnants of the lightning energy entered his body. The impact caused his body to be flung backwards yet again, heavily slammed him onto the ground, devoid of strength.

As the first waves of the demonic beasts sprinted over, Luo Qianqiu swiftly turned and departed. Rumbly sounds echoed out unceasingly as the sound of the stomps of demonic beasts filled the air. A demonic beast approached Qin Wentian's body and lowered its head to observe him, but soon after, as if it were

disinterested by what it saw, the demonic beast strode by and continued rushing ahead.

Very quickly, the remaining waves of the demonic beasts all followed the lead of the first, madly rushing ahead. Strangely enough, none of them trampled on Qin Wentian's body.

All this, Qin Wentian could vaguely sensed it. He felt that he was dying as his consciousness flickered, like the light of a candle about to be extinguished.

“Death follows swiftly after the consciousness is lost. I must live on.”

Abruptly in his heart, an incomparably strong intent awoke. He couldn't die here.

His revenge had yet to be completed. How could he die now?

His father, Qin Chuan, was still imprisoned. How could he die now?

Qin Yao was not out of danger yet. How could he die now?

If he died, how could he live up to the expectations of Teacher Mustang? If he died, how could he repay Luo Huan for her care and assistance. If he died, how could he protect Fatty from being bullied by the Knight's Association?

Qin Wentian, he couldn't die here. His consciousness was unwilling to be dissipated.

At this moment, by Qin Wentian's side, an extremely powerful demonic beast appeared: a Blackwind Condor. The sharpness of feathers that covered its body was comparable to the sharpness of swords.

The Blackwind Condor lowered its head as it glanced at Qin Wentian, while its sharp eyes flickered incessantly, as though it was considering something,

Qin Wentian could sense the presence of the Blackwind Condor near him. It was as if he had developed another eye, allowing him to see everything clearly even without sight. With but a thought from the Blackwind Condor, it could effortlessly snuff the life of Qin Wentian away, easily killing him here.

"I can't die here."

Qin Wentian's survival intent grew stronger and stronger. All of a sudden, a surge of dream energy manifested, and just as abruptly, both Qin Wentian and the Blackwind Condor appeared in an unknown space.

The Blackwind Condor froze. Astonishment could be seen in its eyes.

“Dreamscape.” The Blackwind Condor stared at Qin Wentian. Although he was almost unconscious Qin Wentian could somehow hear the words of the condor. He didn’t want to die in the Dark Forest. The impending sense of doom, coupled with his survival instinct, had somehow managed to allow Qin Wentian to breakthrough to the 2nd level of the Dreamcast Art, the Creation Dream State.

This was Qin Wentian’s dream, a dreamscape he created, pulling the Blackwind Condor along with him as he entered the dreamscape.

With the condor’s strength, it was able to forcibly break out of the dreamscape if it chose to do so. However, it did not.

“The blood that flows in your body, which bloodline does it belong to?” The Blackwind Condor was able to converse with Qin Wentian because this was a dreamscape created by Qin Wentian.

“I have no idea.” Qin Wentian shook his head.

“Then who are you? Why do you know how to create dreamscapes?” The Blackwind Condor continued to inquire. Techniques for creating dreams were extremely limited in the Chu Country.

Only now did Qin Wentian realize that the intelligence of the Dark Forest’s demonic beasts far surpassed what he had previously imagined.

“I’m Qin Wentian, from the Qin Clan of Chu Country. As for this technique of creating dream, this was imparted to me by an elder of my family.” Qin Wentian prudently replied. The Blackwind Condor paused for a moment before it spoke, “You didn’t die despite your injuries. Not only that, you still possessed such a bloodline. I can offer you a twist of fate. But whether you live or die, it would have to depend on your own luck.”

After saying this, the Blackwind Condor broke the dreamscape apart, as it lifted Qin Wentian in its talons and soared towards the deepest part of the Dark Forest.

As the Blackwind Condor departed, the demonic beasts crowd also retreated. It was as though the Blackwind Condor was the leader of this crowd of demonic beasts.

Very quickly, the Dark Forest reverted to its previous state of quietness.

In the middle of the air, a cultivator arrived, riding upon a huge demonic beast.

“Qingcheng, where is he?” An old man riding atop of a griffon inquired as he gazed at Mo Qingcheng. Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes flickered, and she replied, “I’m not sure, I was obstructed by Chu Tianjiao. After that, Luo Qianqiu chased after Qin Wentian, seeking to kill him.”

“Luo Qianqiu again.” The eyes of the old man flickered with cold light. Beside him, there was another powerful cultivator. This

person was none other than Ren Qianxing.

“This Chu Tianjiao, the way he acts is too crazy. Not only that, he has an extremely close relationship with that man. If he inherits the throne, in the future, our Emperor Star Academy would surely be in danger.

Ren Qianxing exclaimed in a low tone, as he cast his gaze over at the Dark Forest.

“Qianxing, as for what Qingcheng told us earlier, Qin Wentian’s talent is not in any way inferior to that of Luo Qianqiu. Not only that, he isn’t cold and unfeeling, and is willing to embark on a path of death for the sake of saving his father. If he somehow survives this, the Emperor Star Academy will spare no expenses and go all out to nurture him.” The old man spoke. Ren Qianxing nodded his head. “I have long wanted to induct him into the plan. If he survives, the Emperor Star Academy will pave his future for him.”

As the sound of his voice faded, they exploded into motion and began to search through the Dark Forest. However, they were unable to find a single trace of Qin Wentian — even his body was unable to be found. It was completely unknown as to whether he had died or if he was still alive.

AGM 084 – Fantasy

In the depths of the Dark Forest, was a hilly region where only an extremely limited number of cultivators had ventured.

Over here, there were actually no hints of demonic Qi, and was equivalent a pure land.

On top of a gigantic slab of stone at the peak of the hill, there was a figure lying there. This figure was none other than Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian didn't know where in the world he was. He was only concerned about not letting his last wisps of consciousness become extinguished.

The 12 Connecting styles of the Life Needle Art, Uncle Black had once warned him to not use this particular needle technique if he had not stepped into Yuanfu. The sudden burst of strength granted to him by the eruption of his Bloodline Limit wasn't something he was capable of withstanding. Previously, back in the Emperor Star Academy, luckily there were people taking care of him, ensuring his safety. But this time around, not only did he execute this particular needle technique again, he was also suffering from grievous injuries that pushed his life extremely close to death.

Qin Wentian's entire body was completely devoid of strength; he could only depend on his undying will to persist on, guarding the flickering flames of his life force.

“I can cultivate in my dream.”

Qin Wentian was clear that for those who chose to tread the martial path, absorbing energy would enable their life force to blossom. If he wanted to live, he first had to recover the energy in his body in order to have a chance at survival. However, he soon noticed that this pure land seemed to be a place totally removed from Heaven and Earth. He had no way of sensing any Astral Constellations, no way to absorb the Astral Energy into his body.

This situation caused Qin Wentian to be extremely depressed. If there was no energy in his body, he would soon starve to death after a few days.

“Could this place be my burial ground?” Qin Wentian was extremely unwilling. He could not die here.

Wishing to break apart the bindings of this space, his strong survival intent enabled a dream-will to be born, as he tried to get a glimpse of this space

Over here in this spacious land, he was the only one lying extremely helpless atop the gigantic slab of stone. However, at this moment in the dream, he saw a shimmering, faintly discernable mountain peak in the nearby distance, standing tall, piercing through the dome of the Heavens.

“This space...this isn’t my dream.” Qin Wentian’s heart shuddered. At this moment, the shimmering mountain peak appeared again, followed abruptly by eight more mountains. A total of nine such mountain peaks appeared and encircled the hilly

region, causing immense shock to fill Qin Wentian's heart.

The nine mountain peaks appeared to possess an otherworldly aura, flickering in and out of existence. All this, was it a dream? Or was it reality?

Qin Wentian asked himself, unable to distinguish the differences between the two.

As his dream-will drifted about, Qin Wentian saw a scene unfolding before him. A middle-aged figure in a green-colored robe was wandering the world and eventually came to this hilly region. The scenery in the image was extremely picturesque, as the middle-aged figure lied down atop the gigantic slab of stone and fell asleep.

As he slept, the nine towering mountain peaks suddenly appeared, encircling the entire hilly region. And in the middle of the nine mountain peaks, countless images, recordings of scenes, manifested.

Each of the recordings that appeared unceasingly unfolded. There was simply too much for Qin Wentian's attention to take in. As the recordings flashed by, he only saw the middle-aged figure casually using a hand to pluck a star down from the heavens. Using a sword, he undered mountains and rivers with a casual slash. Not only that, with a pierce of his fingers, the middle-aged man poked a hole through the dome of the Heavens.

However, everything appeared to be a dream.

After he awoke, the man shook the dust of his body and displayed a carefree smile, before he stood up and slowly ambled away.

Soon after, the nine towering mountain peaks gradually disappeared.

“A dream could allow one to traverse the entire Heavens and Earth, a dream could pry into past and present, a dream could allow me to grab the stars and steal the moon. Since I can do anything I want in a dream, why not be a free spirit, and dream of something lofty and unrealistic, indulging myself in fantasy!”

The man let out a long laughter, carefree and unrestraint, as he left the imprint of a lofty and unrealistic dream atop of the gigantic slab of stone in the hilly region.

“Dream of something lofty and unrealistic.”

Qin Wentian slightly trembled. His dream-will drifted over to one of the mountain peaks, where the recordings continued without pause. Instantly, Qin Wentian felt a strong current of attraction, as his will was absorbed into the scene.

He realised that over here at this particular towering mountain peak, there was a dream recorded.

The green robed middle-aged figure transformed into a Roc and hovered between the Heavens and the Earth. Abruptly, that Roc's

enormous eyes blinked, as a ray of light seemed to zoom towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian only felt a surge of terrifying energy current, even sharper than swords, piercing his body, and he let out a blood-curdling yell.

“No.....” Qin Wentian silently roared in rage. He wanted to live. He couldn’t die here.

“Since this is merely a dream, why should I be afraid of it”

In a flash of understanding, Qin Wentian forced his eyes to gaze in the direction of the Roc’s eyes. It was as if a tens of thousands filaments of light rays pierced through his body, but yet, he felt no fear in his heart.

The Roc hovered between the Heavens and Earth, traveling 10,000 miles away with the support of the wind, with unmatched speed.

Qin Wentian’s heart started to palpitate wildly, as his dream-will withdrew from that recording. His will then entered the second mountain peak, where the green robed middle-aged figure transformed into an Ancient God, easily plucking stars from the skies, crumbling the Heavens and Earth. Qin Wentian didn’t know how many times he had “died” in that dream. He merely resisted that surge of will filled with destruction time after time and tenaciously struggled to prevent his flickering will of consciousness from being extinguished.

In the third mountain peak, the green robed middle-aged figure

slashed apart a mountain with a single strike, breaking the heavens with the pierce of a single finger, annihilating everything.

In the fourth mountain peak, the green robed middle-aged figure crumbled mountains and overturned the oceans with a single roar.

.....

In the ninth mountain peak, the green robed middle-aged figure cast his gaze across past and present. Any and all living things that his gaze landed on died and turned into dust.

It was unknown how many times Qin Wentian experienced the pain and suffering of 'dying'. Under the onslaught of that mighty pressure, he was like a particle of sand within a huge desert, tiny and inconsequential. And yet, that flickering candle flame that represented his life force never extinguished.

Nine towering mountain peaks, nine different types of heavenly-defying wills. Each and every one of the wills possessed the potential to destroy the Heavens and exterminate the Earth.

Qin Wentian's dream-will retreated, and he sighed. What a grand, lofty dream.

The imprints that the dreams recorded had an extraordinary strength and power within them. However, Qin Wentian did not believe that the nine towering mountain peaks were real.

Just as the middle-aged figure had said: life was nothing but a dream. Why not be free-spirited and carefree, indulging oneself in fantasy?

“Nine mountain peaks, nine different dreams.” Qin Wentian murmured. Every dream possessed the power to destroy the Heavens and exterminate the Earth. Was it because the green robed middle-aged figure had magnified the scope and scale of his power to the max and dared to fully indulge in his fantasy?

“What a monstrous genius.”

Qin Wentian exclaimed. That green robed middle-aged figure was most assuredly a monstrous genius.

He had once thought that dream-type Astral Souls would require special innate techniques before one would be able to cultivate and unleash their power. However, the middle-aged figure proved him wrong, allowing him to gain a rare insight of enlightenment.

Dreams by themselves were a type of energy that was present everywhere.

Qin Wentian pondered deeply over the insight he gained. Now, after he calmed down, he was no longer as fearful that the flickering flame of his life force would be extinguished. Instead, he knew that he would never die. This belief only grew stronger and stronger.

“Indulge myself in fantasy.” Qin Wentian mumbled, as his dream will pondered over the insights he just gained.

Time slowly flowed by. Back on the first mountain peak, the scene unfolding emitted a radiant, resplendent light. At this moment, many of the demonic beasts in the Dark Forest, approached the source of the light and saw a shimmering mountain peak, flickering in and out of existence.

After a period of time had passed, as the demonic beasts looked over in this direction, a second shimmering mountain peak appeared. Momentarily, a surge of terrifying, sealing energy emanated forth, causing fear and shock to appear in the hearts of the beasts.

These demonic beasts know that the pure land had the power to seal itself from everything from the external world. No Yuan Qi, no Demonic Qi. If they entered the place, they too would sink into an unending dream.

At this moment, however, over at the pure land, the towering mountain peaks appeared one after another, increasingly resplendent.

After the nine mountain peaks were fully formed, a surge of awe-inspiring energy gushed out. That pressure's terrifying fluctuations travelled towards the Dark Forest, sealing everything it contacted. Fear rose in the hearts of the demonic beasts, as they frenziedly sprinted away, trying to escape.

In the middle of the air, the Blackwind Condor's gaze was sharp as it stared in that direction. The youth that was able to create

dreams...was he the source of this commotion?

The dazzling lights of the nine mountain peaks gathered in the air before coalescing into a radiant lightscreen, isolating everything within.

On the other side of that isolating, a silhouette appeared inside Qin Wentian's dreamscape. This was none other than the green-robed, middle-aged figure from before. Naturally, the appearance of the green robe middle-aged figure was also only seen by Qin Wentian.

The man smiled as he stood in the air, regarding Qin Wentian.

“Qin Wentian pays his respect to senior. Are we inside a dreamscape?”

Upon seeing the middle-aged man, Qin Wentian couldn't help but be respectful.

“This is my dream-will. You entered my dream and even caused my dream-will to manifest. For that, I will bestow upon you good fortune. Speak, what do you desire?” The middle-aged man smiled as he spoke.

Qin Wentian gazed at that isolation light screen before replying. “Senior would have used sealing energy to isolate this pure land from the surroundings. I do not want the seal to obstruct my cultivation.”

“This is simple.” The middle-aged man lightly stomped his foot, causing the isolation space to shake. “From now onwards, the seal will not obstruct your cultivation. What else do you desire?”

“I want to absorb all the demonic Qi in Dark Forest to fully form my Garuda’s mark.” Qin Wentian spoke again, only to see the middle-aged figure slashed open a tear in space. Boundless amounts of demonic Qi gushed in, forming into a terrifying spiral that was relentlessly absorbed into Qin Wentian’s body.

“You won’t be able to digest it all. This doesn’t count as good fortune either. What else do you desire?” The middle-aged man asked again.

Qin Wentian’s gaze was sharp, so sharp that it was akin to an incomparable sharp sword flying out of its sheath, piercing the Heavens. He almost died because of the 3rd Prince and Luo Qianqiu. He would certainly have to ‘repay’ them for this favor.

“I want the Chu Country to not obstruct my path of cultivation.” Qin Wentian exclaimed. Unexpectedly, the middle-aged man laughed again. “This should be settled by yourself and cannot be considered a request.”

“Just meeting senior could already be considered good fortune. Junior doesn’t dare to request for too much. In the future, if I have the opportunity to meet with senior, I will personally and respectfully offer my thanks.” Qin Wentian bowed in reply.

“Since you could make my dream-will manifest, this could also be considered a form of karma. Even if you don’t want any good fortune, I would still have to bestow upon you some. This is the Dao of my cultivation and has nothing to do with you.” The middle-aged man laughed. With a flicker of his eyes, an imprint that shone with dazzling radiance was transmitted into Qin Wentian’s sea of consciousness.

Qin Wentian’s sea of consciousness trembled, and he suddenly awoke from the dream. At the same time, the middle-aged figure’s dream-will dissipated.

On top of the desolate hilly region, Qin Wentian remained there, quietly lying on the gigantic slab of stone. There was no middle-aged figure, no radiant screen of isolation. Not even the nine towering mountain peaks were anywhere to be seen.

AGM 085 – Winter Snow

Qin Wentian laid on the stone slab motionless and silent, alone, as gentle gusts of wind billowed past.

Every time night descended, the stone slab on top of the hilly region would emit radiant Astral Light as the starlight from the heavenly layers cascaded down, and it was absorbed by the silhouette on the stone slab. It was as though this was a cycle that would last forever—it happened every night.

The 2nd state of the Dreamcast Art, the Immersed/Creation Dream state, allowed the user to immensely heighten their absorption rate of Astral Energy. Not only that, but Qin Wentian seemed as if he'd been enlightened. The Astral Light was unceasingly absorbed into his body, and was circulated throughout his arterial pathways as it recovered his energy and strength—it even seemed to be attempting to breakthrough, in order to form new circular arterial pathways.

Not only that, but Qin Wentian had also created a dreamscape to practice his Dreamcast Art, fully indulging himself in his fantasy. In his dream, he was omnipotent; there was nothing that he couldn't do.

Cultivators only needed to absorb Yuan Qi or Astral Qi. It was fine if they had no food or water.

As the weather turned colder and colder, there would occasionally be gusts of chilly wind that would billow past, which

fluttered his robes. Despite this, his eyes were perpetually closed—as though he was forever in a deep sleep.

And today, the skies had darkened and rain had begun to pour down, onto the body of the youth and making his clothes wet. The youth still remained motionless, with his eyes closed. It was as if he'd entered into a state of epiphany, completely forgetting his surroundings, even forgetting himself.

In the darkened skies, rumbling sounds rang out as thunder and lightning snaked around each other in the clouds, before striking down from the heavens. The youth remained indifferent.

Not only that, but his facial features gradually underwent a change. It was as though the lines on his face had become more exquisite, transforming his face into a mask of resolute determination.

The winter snow floated down and covered the body of the youth; it was as if he was wearing a robe made of winter snow.

Snow also floated down towards the Chu Country's royal capital. Today, the youths from all the academies were outside of their dorms, temporarily forgetting about cultivating, and were just standing there to admire the beautiful snow.

In the Royal Academy, there were many students who were leisurely strolling about in the snow. Many of these were couples, and although their level of cultivation wasn't high, it was still fine as they were in their youth. Youthfulness was a period of time

where life shined the most brilliantly. After a certain age, if they decided to focus on the martial path, they'd never be able to find their way back to the pureness of this current moment.

The path of the Martial Way was arduous and cruel.

Mu Rou inclined her head as she gazed at the floating snow, and silently sighed in her heart. It had been over two months and she still hadn't seen Qin Wentian appear in the City of Illusions again, or had any other news about him.

Maybe he was the same as many other genius elites—they died in their youth, before they could reach their pinnacle, completely unknown to the masses.

He'd created history in the Emperor Star Academy, as well as propagated both enormous, and incredibly small, commotions. But in spite of this, all of the marks that he'd left would soon be hidden by the merciless passage of time. There'd always be new legends who'd attract the gaze of the crowd.

The vast Royal Capital of the Chu Country had no lack of talented young men.

Last year was Luo Qianqiu, this year was Qin Wentian. However, Luo Qianqiu was still creating his own story.

Next to her, footsteps rang out. Mu Rou turned around and saw Ye Zhan and Liu Yan.

Ye Zhan, making use of his clan's connections, had enrolled Liu Yan in the Royal Academy.

Mu Rou cast a glance at Liu Yan who was next to Ye Zhan. This girl didn't have a bad heart, it was only because she'd originated from a small place, and had experienced many things after arriving in the Royal Capital; it inevitably caused her values to change, as she'd wanted to lead her own life. Her current lifestyle was exactly what she'd wanted.

This couldn't be blamed entirely on her. However, Qin Wentian had saved both Liu Yan and Liu Yue's lives on that fateful day, and despite seeing the situation Qin Wentian had been in, she'd chosen to remain silent, making her choice clear.

However, to each their own. Mu Rou had no qualifications to blame Liu Yan either. At most, she would keep her distance from Liu Yan.

"Mu Rou, I've heard that many other clans, because of you, have distanced themselves from the Mu Clan. Do you want to consider dating Yanaro? After all, Yanaro has always shown an interest in you." Ye Zhan lightly exclaimed, causing Mu Rou's countenance to turn unsightly.

A few months ago, the news of what'd happened in Royal Clan's hunting grounds had been spread all over the Royal Capital. Although she'd emphasized that her choice was hers, and hers alone, she was quickly ignored. The crafty foxes who were in

aristocratic clans only cared about the attitude of the 3rd prince, and thus weren't willing to build a closer connection or have good relations with the Mu Clan.

Thus, recently, many other clans had started shunning the Mu Clan. As for Mu Rou, she was under even greater pressure from her clan. Currently, she was no longer even entitled to the cultivation resources of her clan.

“My matters have no need for your worry.” Mu Rou calmly spoke, as she silently sighed in her heart. In the past, she'd had such a good relationship with Chu Ling. But after that incident, Chu Ling, contrary to her expectations, hadn't only ignored her for a few days; eventually she even stopped associating herself with Mu Rou. Even when they meet, Chu Ling would always look at her coldly.

“Hehe, all of this because of a dead man.” Ye Zhan sarcastically added, as he walked past Mu Rou.

Liu Yan, by his side, lowered her head, and didn't speak throughout their conversation.

“Because of a dead man...?” Mu Rou sighed. Was he really dead? Mu Rou didn't understand why she was unable to forget about Qin Wentian. Although this wasn't love, could it be because of the daily spars that they'd had in the City of Illusions that caused her to have a faint feeling that she missed him in her heart?

The Emperor Star Academy, in a pavilion—a graceful figure of otherworldly beauty stood there. This was none other than the number one beauty of the Chu Country—Mo Qingcheng.

“Qingcheng, why do you have the time to come and look for this old fool today?” An old man walked over. This old man, named Gu, was none other than the esteemed teacher of Mustang.

“Grandpa.” The beautiful eyes of Mo Qingcheng flickered as she asked, “Is there any news of him?”

Old man Gu naturally understood who the ‘him’ spoken in Mo Qingcheng’s speech was, as he sighed in his heart. So many days had passed, and yet there was still no news of Qin Wentian; most likely, the worst case scenario that they’d anticipated had come true.

“Qingcheng, if I remember correctly, you don’t really concern with yourself with others.” Old man Gu laughed, as though he wanted to change the topic of conversation. Mo Qingcheng rolled her eyes, as she continued, “Is there no more hope left?”

“Sigh!” The old man’s eyes gazed off at some place in the distant horizons, before he shook his head and displayed a bitter smile, “I underestimated Chu Tianjiao. Never had I thought that he’d be so ruthless and decisive, actually using the banquet as an excuse to act directly, as well as ignoring any public opinion. Not only that, but Qin Chuan was used as bait as well. He’s many times more ruthless when compared to the Chu Country’s First Prince.”

“What a pity, it doesn’t seem too likely that the First Prince will

take over the Chu Country.”

“Grandpa, why did our Mo Clan not step out and aid the Qin Clan?” Mo Qingcheng asked, “After all, the Mo Clan and Qin Clan used to have an extraordinary relation together.”

“Things aren’t as simple as you think. Behind this, there were too many layers and webs of complications. It’s not so easy for the Mo Clan to openly interfere in this matter.” Old Man Gu calmly replied, “do you still remember how your grandfather¹ once had an agreement with Qin Wu? If their descendants were both a boy and a girl, then they’d be betrothed to each other, and engaged as a couple.”

Old Man Gu had a smile on his face, “If the Qin Clan hadn’t declined and used to be the Qin Clan of the past, then maybe, between you and Qin Wentian, you’d have been bound by karma.”

“When was that, I don’t remember. Anyway, Qin Wentian isn’t the real son of Qin Chuan.” Mo Qingcheng laughed. Naturally, she’d heard of her elders speak about this before. But after the Qin Clan had relocated to the Sky Harmony City, the relations between their Mo Clan and the Qin Clan hadn’t been as close as before, due to living in different locations.

“Now, I only want that fellow to live...” Mo Qingcheng sighed as she too cast her gaze across the horizons, and silently prayed in her heart.

“How’s Qin Yao now?” Mo Qingcheng suddenly asked.

Previously, the people from the Emperor Star Academy had formed a search party to search for Qin Wentian. In the end, they hadn't found any traces of Qin Wentian, but had found Qin Yao instead, and had brought her back to the Emperor Star Academy.

"She's in the academy—at least this way, she won't be in any danger." Old Man Gu replied, as Mo Qingcheng lightly nodded her head.

"Chu Tianjiao will never let Qin Yao off." Old Man Gu added in a low voice, "Based on my understanding of him, because the trap he set up in the Dark Forest didn't succeed, he'll never give up."

"Grandpa, you mean to say that Chu Tianjiao will make use of Qin Chuan in order to deal with Qin Yao again?" But he already used this tactic once, will it really work again?"

"For those that value emotions and relations, and with Qin Chuan as bait, even if Chu Tianjiao used this tactic a hundred times, Qin Yao would still willingly jump into the trap." Old Man Gu shook his head. He clearly knew this logic, and so did Chu Tianjiao.

Mo Qingcheng could only remain silent.

In the Dark Forest, snow, likewise, blanketed the ground. At this moment, near the boundary of the Dark Forest, atop of the snow, a gigantic Blackwind Condor descended down.

A youth jumped down from the back of the Blackwind Condor. This youth was about 17 years of age, and was clad in beast-skin clothing. His features were no longer immature, and even had a hint of demonic charm. This person was none other than Qin Wentian

“Senior, for the kindness that you’ve bestowed me, thank you.” Qin Wentian turned and thanked the Blackwind Condor. If the Blackwind Condor hadn’t aided him previously, he would’ve already died within the Dark Forest, and would’ve become food for the countless demonic beasts inside.

A low sound rumbled out from the Blackwind Condor’s mouth, and Qin Wentian laughed as if he didn’t have a care in the world, “Don’t worry, I’ve already engraved the matter Senior Condor requested my help with into my heart. In the future, after I’m able to control the power of my Bloodline Limit freely, I’ll definitely fulfil my promise, and gift Senior Condor with 3 drops of my blood essence.”

It was as though the Blackwind Condor could understand Qin Wentian’s speech. Screeching, it flapped its wings and soared up into the skies, causing a terrifying gust of afterwind to billow past. Soon after, the Blackwind Condor transformed into a black-colored speck as it disappeared into the horizons.

Qin Wentian inclined his head, as he regarded the disappearing Blackwind Condor. His heart was filled with puzzlement. He didn’t understand why the Blackwind Condor had wanted his Blood Essence.

Maybe, his blood had some special characteristic to it. Previously, when he'd fainted in the Dark Forest, several demonic beasts had passed him by, some had even given him quite a wide berth.

Not bothering to think about it too much, Qin Wentian turned around. With his back facing the Dark Forest, he started to walk towards the connecting city.

On top of the snow, footprints appeared one after another. A glint of light flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes that was even sharper than a sword.

He vowed that this towering Royal Capital, with all its insidious plots, would not be able to block the path that he wanted to tread in the future.

1. The grandfather referenced here is Mo Qingcheng's paternal grandfather, because in Chinese, the character (爷爷) represents a paternal grandfather, while (外公) represents a non-paternal grandfather.↵

AGM 086 – Those That Share The Same Fate

Coldness seeped through the air in Royal Capital as winter approached. Snowflakes were drifting in the air, while several people on the streets were clad in fur clothing to protect themselves from the cold. However, there were some cultivators who only wore thin layers, disregarding the cold of winter.

Qin Wentian was clad in simple beast-skins as he walked forwards in the snow. On his way, as he passed by a few inns, he would see some hot-blooded men drinking wine to ward away the cold and discussing the Chu Country's recent occurrences.

“Ah, such a beautiful scenery of snow falling, in addition to that, I still have delicious wine to accompany me. This combination is, without a doubt, one of the most marvelous things in the world.”

At this moment, the sound of a bright and crisp voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned his gaze in that direction, only to see a wine shop outside a small and dilapidated looking house.

There was a table there, and sitting around it were two people.

“Haha, let's toast to the visit of a good friend!” Another person spoke. This person was about 27 to 28 years of age and had refined features, emitting an extraordinary air. His eyes were clear and filled with spirit. His smile was also warm and gentle, giving people a sense of kinship.

“Brother Qin, how about it?” The first person who spoke earlier

turned around and beckoned Qin Wentian over, laughing. This person was none other than Immortal Drunken Wine, who was enjoying his wine with a friend of his.

“Might as well.” Qin Wentian laughed as he entered the wine shop, casting a glance at the 27 to 28 year-old male before asking, “May I inquire who you are?”

“Those who meet because of a mutual love of wine are friends even without inquiring each other’s background.” The man toasted Qin Wentian and laughed freely, his state of being at ease not losing out to the free-spirited Immortal Drunken Wine sitting beside him.

“Nicely said. Let’s get drunk.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Are you sure?” The young man smiled as he looked at Qin Wentian.

“Of course.” Qin Wentian nodded. Smiling, the young man poured a large amount of wine in a bowl and offered it to Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian raised the bowl up as he drank, and as the alcohol entered his body, his eyes turned as round as saucers. He was unable to finish the wine in one gulp.

“Cough, cough.” Qin Wentian coughed a few times as he put the bowl down. His face already turning red, causing Immortal Drunken Wine and the other young man to laugh uproariously.

“This fellow...you don’t you know how strong the wine was?” Immortal Drunken Wine, looking at Qin Wentian’s embarrassed expression, laughed especially loudly.

Qin Wentian could only shake his head as he smiled bitterly, rolling his eyes at Immortal Drunken Wine. “Did you forget to remind me?”

“Well, you were the one who said you wanted to get drunk.” The young man laughed, causing Qin Wentian to be helpless. He could only grit his teeth and raise the bowl of wine again, forcing himself to finish the wine he was offered as his face turned completely red.

“Your turn.” Qin Wentian spoke as he looked at the young man.

“Okay, it’s my turn now.” Smiling, the young man poured himself a full bowl of wine, draining it in a single gulp. After finishing it, he set down his bowl with no change to his countenance, causing Qin Wentian to sweat in his heart. This person...was his drinking capacity as large as Immortal Drunken Wine’s?

“How bout two more bowls?” The young man smiled as he gazed at Qin Wentian, causing Qin Wentian to roll his eye again. “Stop bullying me.”

“Haha, I shall wait for you to build up your drinking capacity. Let’s drink again in the future.” The young man spoke as he stood up before shifting his gaze to Immortal Drunken Wine. “If there’s another chance in the future, you’re welcome to bring this little

brother to my place for a drink.”

After saying this, the young man retrieved his coat as well as a conical shaped bamboo hat and walked out into the snow. The steps of this man were extremely slow and didn't seem to belong to a cultivator. Despite this, Qin Wentian could feel that the young man was not so simple.

“This fellow's strength shouldn't be that weak, right?” Qin Wentian asked as he regarded Immortal Drunken Wine, who was beside him.

Immortal Drunken Wine shook his head. He stared at the back view of the young man from earlier, feeling sympathy in his heart.

“This person is incredibly intelligent, values relations and brotherhood, and has an extremely high level of morality. The only flaw about him is that there's no way for him to cultivate.” Immortal Drunken Wine sighed, causing the countenance of Qin Wentian to freeze, as a glint of astonishment flickered in his eyes.

Immortal Drunken Wine had an unrestrained and frank character, so this was likely to be true. It was indeed a pity for such a person not to be able to cultivate.

Involuntarily, Qin Wentian was reminded of himself. Back when he was still unable to cultivate, he too experienced the cold stares and cutting words. If the young man was from an ordinary background, it still wasn't too bad. But if he was born into the aristocratic clans, he would suffer oppression no matter where he

went. Based on the disposition of the young man, there seemed to be a much higher probability that he belonged to the latter category.

“Currently, you are rumoured to be dead. To think that you actually appear here today, I’m really relieved.” Observing Han Li, Immortal Drunken Wine smiled.

“My luck is pretty good, and it could be said that I narrowly escaped from the clutches of death.” Qin Wentian laughed. This time around, he had been infinitesimally close to death. Were it not for a series of fortunate coincidence, the Blackwind Condor, the dreams of the green-robed man, and eventually, the dream-will of the green-robed man, without a doubt, he would surely be buried in the Dark Forest right now.

“Just as the saying goes, one would be destined for good fortune should they survive a great disaster.” Immortal Drunken Wine didn’t ask for the details as he continued, “What are your plans now? Will you still return to the academy?”

“Before returning to the academy, I wish to visit the Divine Weapon Pavilion. I thought you wanted me to craft a good sword for you. Do you want to come along with me?” Qin Wentian laughed and waited for Immortal Drunken Wine’s answer.

Immortal Drunken Wine’s eyes shone as he laughed, “Seems like you broke through in your comprehension of regards to the field of comprehending Divine Imprints. Let’s go, I will accompany you to the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

After this, Immortal Drunken Wine rose, and he left together with Qin Wentian, strolling leisurely in the direction of the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

Upon seeing Qin Wentian's return, Francis was extremely joyful. He had always kept a lookout for news regarding Qin Wentian. On that day, when the rumor about Qin Wentian's death reached him, he was devastated and had always been in a disturbed state of mind.

After knowing the purpose of Qin Wentian's visit today, Francis informed Yang Chen, who immediately sent over three other expert weaponsmiths and worked together with Francis to forge the base of the Sword-type Divine Weapon. Meanwhile, Qin Wentian was responsible for the most important task of all—the inscription of the Divine Imprint.

The final result made Yang Cheng tremendously excited, because the finished product was a high grade, 2nd level Divine Origin Sword.

The price of this sword was extraordinary high, and the augmentation effect was incredibly useful for those in the later stages of the Arterial Circulation Realm. Not only that, the augmentation effect was even more effective when used by those in the lower and middle stages of Arterial Circulation.

Taking into account the Origin Sword's ability to store up Astral Energy, once there was a suitable innate technique, the power that

erupted forth would be inconceivably terrifying.

Qin Wentian gifted the Immortal Drunken Sword a high grade, 2nd level Origin Sword. Now, he could only create high grade, 2nd level Divine Weapons. If one day he broke through and was able to create 3rd level Divine Weapons, he would gift another 3rd level Divine Sword to Immortal Drunken Wine.

After improving his comprehension of Divine Inscriptions, and now that he was able to create high grade, 2nd level Divine Weapons, Qin Wentian would naturally not lack Yuan Meteor Stones for cultivation.

Qin Wentian did not immediately return back to the Emperor Star Academy. Instead, he requested Yang Cheng to first gather news regarding Qin Yao. After knowing that Qin Yao was in the Emperor Star Academy, it was as though a burden had been lifted off his heart as hints of gratitude towards the Emperor Star Academy appeared. From what Yang Chen said, the one who made the decision was one of the nine grand elders of the academy. It was precisely Mustang's esteemed teacher, who went by the name of 'old man Gu'.

After that, Qin Wentian slept almost everyday. Even Francis had no idea what Qin Wentian was doing.

Currently, in his dreamscape, Qin Wentian stood alone in a world of his own creation.

In front of Qin Wentian, there were two immense pictograph. In

one of the pictograph, the images recorded on it was extremely complex and filled with fluctuations. The outlines of the symbols turned and twisted, evolving constantly, as countless Divine Imprints were created.

This was none other than the Spirit Refinement Method that Qin Wentian was cultivating: using the power of Divine Imprints to condense and convert Astral Energy into Divine Yuan Energy.

As for the second pictograph, it was not as complex. Every brushstroke was filled with vitality, bold and imposing. One brushstroke to outline a mountain and sea, one drop of ink to indicate spring and autumn. This second pictograph was a portrait of a scenery, depicted by mountains and rivers.

The second pictograph was called the Landscape Portrait. This was the good fortune bestowed upon him by the green-robed, middle-aged figure in the nine towering mountain peaks in the depths of the Dark Forest.

This Landscape Pictograph was incredibly mysterious. It was as if the green-robed man had used his dreams as ink to draw the portrait's outlines, sketching out the rivers and mountains in his heart. Under the green-robed man's power of actualization, the energy channels in a human body as well as all forms of energy and innate techniques had their essences drawn within the portrait and could be seen from the outlines of brushstrokes in the pictograph.

“What a terrifying power of actualization, using his dreams as ink to draw the Landscape Pictograph. Not only that, it also seemed to complement the Spirit Refinement Method recorded in

the first pictograph.” An intention rose in Qin Wentian’s mind. The Spirit Refinement Method was a technique that used Divine Imprints to compact and convert Astral Energy into Divine Yuan Energy before being explosively released via innate techniques. An unimaginably perverse technique.

Although the Landscape Portrait was neither an innate technique nor a cultivation art, without a doubt, it was also a priceless treasure. The portrait had the ability to enable the user to visualise and comprehend all things on Heaven and Earth. Qin Wentian could only slowly try to gain enlightenment regarding its mysteries.

Qin Wentian immersed himself in studying the two pictographs. And a few days later, he felt that his comprehension regarding 2nd level Divine Imprints underwent a vast improvement. He could now easily inscribe 2nd level Divine Imprints, and at the same time, the speed of converting Astral Energy to Divine Energy was also getting increasingly faster. When the day that he could instantly convert Astral Energy into a granule of Divine Energy came, he would have mastered the 1st level of the Spirit Refinement Method and would be able to use 2nd-level Divine Imprints to aid in the compacting and conversion of Astral Energy.

In the Chu Country’s Royal Capital, snow continued falling, gradually forming a thicker and thicker layer on the ground. Many of the academy’s younger students rushed about building snowmen while the older students busied themselves with their cultivation, trying to break through their limits.

The demon of the Emperor Star Academy, Luo Qianqiu, was

currently sitting crossed-legged at the rooftop of a pavilion. The falling snow drifted about but was unable to touch him. Columns of lightning flashed, and as a thunderous sound rumbled, his body began to emit a terrifying pressure.

In his body, the terrifying lightning Astral Energy from the Lightning Revenant Constellation frenziedly gushed about his energy channels and meridians,, attempting to form his 8th circular arterial pathway, but there seemed to be an obstruction of sorts.

Snapping open his eyes, arcs of lightning flickered as he cast his gaze at the Heavenly Star Pavilion in the distance. The task that his father had not managed to accomplish would be accomplished by him in the future.

Retrieving a spiritual pill, Luo Qianqiu popped the pill in his mouth and closed his eyes again, attempting to break through.

Everyone was busy with their own matters.

Today, a shocking piece of news spread throughout the Royal Capital. In the Divine Weapon Pavilion, a young genius grandmaster weaponsmith was born, a figure capable of inscribing 3rd level Divine Imprints. His sudden arrival received a huge commotion!

AGM 087 – Scenery Of Snow

The news from the Divine Weapon Pavilion undoubtedly shook the entire Royal Capital. Cultivators were always busy trying to break through, so how would they have the time to comprehend Divine Imprints, let alone studying their inscription process? Usually, grandmaster level weaponsmiths would all be old men that had spent vast amounts of time on comprehending the Divine Imprints as well as the inscription process.

Of course, cultivators with Forging-type Astral Souls would possess an overwhelming advantage in this regard. But even so, if they wanted to inscribe a 3rd level Divine Imprint, they would still need tens of years of effort and study before they could inscribe a 3rd level imprint. Now that there was news about a grandmaster weaponsmith, a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist before the age of 20, how could it not be shocking?

This piece of news held extreme importance to the world of weaponsmiths and caused the Chu Country to be in the limelight. To craft a 3rd level Divine Weapon, one would need master weaponsmiths that had tons of experiences, in addition to precious and valuable materials to forge the base of the weapon.

As to why there was only a limited number of 3rd level weaponsmith, it was because there was almost no one who could inscribed a 3rd level Divine Imprint.

Divine imprints were the final and most important step of forging a Divine Weapon.

And moreover, just when many influential parties started to launch their investigations trying to find out who exactly was the young genius grandmaster, the Divine Weapon Pavilion spared no expenses to lock down this piece of information. It was clear that the information that spread rapidly had been unintentionally leaked by someone within the Divine Weapon Pavilion. This someone was none other than a weaponsmith apprentice, and currently, the Divine Weapon Pavilions had even go so far as to lock the weaponsmith apprentice in a secure location.

The place where Qin Wentian was residing was tightly guarded by many guards. Yang Cheng was perpetually here, insisting on following Qin Wentian about, causing Qin Wentian to be speechless.

“Grandmaster Qin, as long as you agree to join the Divine Weapon Pavilion, in the future, all the Yuan Meteor Stones that you need for your cultivation will be fully provided by us.” Yang Cheng enthusiastically offered. Ever since Yang Cheng discovered that Qin Wentian could inscribe 3rd level Divine Imprints, he had never left Qin Wentian’s side, enthusiastically making proposals and offering all kinds of conditions.

A 17 year old who could inscribe 3rd level Divine Imprints? What sort of character was he? At the very least, in the history of the Chu Country, there had never been someone who could accomplish such a feat. And thus, Yang Chen was very clear on what he had to do.

“I would be able to procure enough Yuan Meteor Stones for my cultivation without even joining the Divine Weapon Pavilion.” Qin

Wentian replied, “The things that I currently lacked are not Yuan Meteor Stones.”

“I understand.” Yang Chen smiled, as he continued. “You mean beautiful women, right? I will surely try my best to satisfy Grandmaster Qin’s desire.”

After that, Yang Chen even winked lewdly to Qin Wentian, causing black lines to appear all over Qin Wentian’s face.

“Mr. Yang, you can just call me Wentian.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled and shook his head. Grandmaster Qin just sounded way too tacky.

“Yang Chen, how’s your chat with Grandmaster Qin?” At this moment, a crisp voice echoed out. Hearing this voice, Yang Chen’s countenance grew solemn, as he gazed at Qin Wentian, stating, “Grandmaster Qin, the Divine Weapon Pavilion’s vice pavilion master has personally come to speak to you.”

Qin Wentian was shocked as well. Given the status the Divine Weapon Pavilion held, the vice pavilion master should definitely be someone extraordinary as well.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian saw a beautiful lady walking in. This lady was about 25 years old and had exquisite features, with milky white skin. Her figure was extremely beguiling; just one look at her would cause people’s hearts to be stirred.

“What a handsome young fellow, I shall call you Wentian directly then. My name is An Liuyan. If you don’t mind, just calling me Sister Yan will do.” The lady’s voice sounded crisp and melodious, and it seemed to contain a special characteristic to it, causing those who heard her voice to feel extremely comfortable. Just the first sentence she uttered had already shortened the distance between her and Qin Wentian.

“Sister Yan.” Qin Wentian smiled as he returned the greeting.

“This fellow Yang Cheng simply doesn’t know how to receive guests well, don’t blame him. I’m here because I wanted to tell you that from now on, you are welcome to use all of the Divine Weapon Pavilion’s stock of cultivation resources, including cultivation arts, innate techniques, and even high level Divine Imprints. At the same time, for the Yuan Meteor Stones that you require for your cultivation, regardless how many you need, the Divine Weapon Pavilion will provide them all. Not only that, all of the Divine Weapon Pavilion’s secrets would be opened to you as well, and if you ever need help, the Divine Weapon Pavilion will send out Yuanfu Realm cultivators to aid you in whatever you need them to do.”

An Liuyan lightly smiled as she spoke. Towards the side, Yang Chen and Francis trembled. These conditions.....

“What do I need to do?” Qin Wentian was very clear that there was no such thing as a free lunch in this world.

“The Divine Weapon Pavilion has no requests of you.” An Liuyan’s smile was like the blooming of a beautiful flower. She

passed a medallion to Qin Wentian. “This medallion will bestow upon you the authority and benefits of a vice pavilion master, just like me.”

Qin Wentian didn't extend his hand out to receive it. Seeing this, An Liuyan walked over, lifted Qin Wentian's hands, and directly pressed the medallion into his hands.

“Little fellow, I want to see if you have the face to eat this ‘free lunch’.” An Liuyan's beautiful eyes winked at Qin Wentian before she laughed and departed, leaving behind a speechless Qin Wentian.

Although the Divine Weapon Pavilion had no requests of him, it was just as An Liuyan said. Would he have the face to eat this ‘free lunch’ that they handed him?

The Divine Weapon Pavilion's attitude towards Qin Wentian was decided after analysing and investigating Qin Wentian's background, personality and experiences. Only after that did they decide to spare no expenses to decisively rope him in.

“Brother Wentian, in the future, feel free to look for me if you need anything.” Yang Chen deeply glanced at Qin Wentian, as he silently praised the charm of the vice pavilion master. Her tactics left no room for Qin Wentian to refuse.

“Damn, it seems as though I've fallen into their trap.” After Yang Chen left, Qin Wentian glanced at the medallion in his hand. Only now did he discover that ever since An Liuyan walked in, from

the beginning to the end, he only had the chance to speak a single sentence, let alone refuse. Everything happened so naturally.

Although the conditions offered to him could be considered perfect, Qin Wentian also had to admire her method of persuasion.

“I’m going to take a walk outside.” Qin Wentian said to Francis before stepping out. The sky was still adorned by beautiful snowflakes drifting about. Qin Wentian raised his head as he stared at the skies, wondering when this bout of winter snow would stop snowing.

During these past few days, Qin Wentian had been feeling extremely tensed up, so he finally decided to take a walk outside in order to loosen up.

Subconsciously, his steps brought him to the main hall of the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Although snow was falling outside, it was comfortably warm in the interior of the hall. As he peered in, he could see many people selecting Divine Weapons that were suitable to them.

Entering the main hall, Qin Wentian cast his gaze about, and just as his gaze landed in a remote corner of the hall, his eyes fell upon someone familiar, someone whom he had not seen for a long time.

Star River Association, Grandmaster Murin.

A cultivator’s senses were naturally sharp. Murin could feel

someone was gazing at him. As he turned his head and saw Qin Wentian, astonishment flickered in his eyes. However, he soon recovered, displaying a disdainful smile on his face.

“I heard that you told Gretchen to give me a warning. I also heard that you were the source of many commotions in the academy. Now that you can still appear in front of me, alive, your luck is not bad indeed.”

Murin’s expression was the same as in the Sky Harmony City. Poisonous and ruthless, with arrogance carved deep in his bones. Back then when Qin Wentian had not agreed to be a disciple under him, he schemed and plotted, luring the members of the Qin Clan to seek refuge over at the Star River Association. Many had lost their lives as a result.

From the start to the end, Murin had never once regarded the Qin Clan as people. To him, they were merely tools for him to use as he pleased.

If it was in the past, Qin Wentian would surely have already erupted in anger. But now, although the embers of anger and rage were smouldering in his heart, his outward expression remained calm and unperturbed, as if Murin’s words had no power to disturb him.

“I’ve heard that Grandmaster Murin is a weaponsmith that hails from the Star River Association. What are you doing here? Don’t tell me you need to purchase Divine Weapons?”

“When did you ever have the rights to snub your nose into my matters?” Murin sarcastically replied. The reason of his coming was naturally not to purchase Divine Weapons. He was here because he wanted to see if he could manage to discover any information regarding the genius grandmaster who could inscribe 3rd level Divine Imprints.

Back then, Qin Wentian could already inscribe simple 2nd level Divine Imprints, but Murin did not dare to lump Qin Wentian together with the person he was trying to seek information on.

After all, not even a year had passed. As a weaponsmith, of course he knew how tough was it to achieve a breakthrough in comprehending Divine Imprints. Even for him, he had been stuck at the level of a 2nd level weaponsmith for a long time without the tiniest amount of hope in achieving a breakthrough with regards to comprehending 3rd level Divine Imprints.

“Grandmaster Murin’s matters, frankly speaking, I can’t be bothered as well. I only hope that Grandmaster Murin still remember the despicable act you committed in the Sky Harmony City. Revenge will arrive for you, sooner or later.

Qin Wentian laughed. In response, Murin coldly snorted. “ Let’s hope that you’ll be able to live until that day.”

After this, Murin flicked his sleeves and left. Since Qin Wentian had openly proclaimed his status as a weaponsmith from the Star River Association, he didn’t have the face to continue staying on, not to mention dragging himself down to argue with a junior of a younger generation. Thus, he could only choose to leave.

“What a wet blanket.” Qin Wentian murmured, as he, too, stepped out of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, ambling slowly along while admiring the beautiful falling snow.

After strolling along for some time, Qin Wentian had no idea of where he was. As he cast his gaze over the horizon, he saw a small white body scampering over, camouflaged within the snow. When the little thing neared Qin Wentian, it transformed into a blur of shadows as it leapt into Qin Wentian’s arms.

“Little Rascal.” Qin Wentian was stunned, but he hugged Little Rascal into his embrace. A smile of joy broke out on his visage. “Little fellow, what are you doing here?”

Shortly after, Qin Wentian lifted his head and noticed that a graceful silhouette was walking over and stopped in front of him.

Under the falling snow, the graceful silhouette was clad in clothes that were in the purest shade of white, masking her perfect figure. A face with features so beautiful that it could topple over empires could be seen.

Mo Qingcheng stopped in front of Qin Wentian and slightly lowered her head, smiling shyly.

She then raised her head, revealing her perfectly sculpted features once again. “Let’s get to know each other again. My name is Mo Qingcheng.”

“I’m Qin Wentian.”

Qin Wentian displayed a gentle smile as he regarded Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful countenance. “Thank you for saving me that day outside Sky Harmony City.”

“Don’t mention it. It was this adorable fellow that brought me over.” Mo Qingcheng smiled. “Shall we take a seat over there?”

“Alright.” Qin Wentian nodded his head. The two of them walked towards the front of an ancient tree. Removing his beast-skin outer clothing, Qin Wentian laid it on the ground, using it as a carpet on which both of them sat down with their backs facing the tree.

Mo Qingcheng cast a glance at Qin Wentian, but she didn’t know what to say. As a result, she could only extend her hand, allowing the snowflakes to fall and gathered upon her hand. With a light smile, she spoke, “The snow is so beautiful.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head but didn’t continue saying anything as he silently admired the beautiful scenery of the falling snow.

Little Rascal laid on the ground between them, as though it was asleep. A handsome young man and a beautiful young lady admiring the snow together. This scenario was like a beautiful portrait. Passersby couldn’t help but exclaim in wonder when they saw this.

This beautiful scene persisted for a period of time before Mo Qingcheng turned her head, looking at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian also turned his head to gaze at Mo Qingcheng, lost in her enchanting beauty.

“You are really a dumbo.” Mo Qingcheng smiled. She stood up and walked away. Her graceful silhouette gradually disappeared amidst the falling snow.

“Dumbo?” Qin Wentian was stunned.

“Am I a dumbo?” Qin Wentian asked himself as he looked at Little Rascal, who had once again leaped into his embrace, only to see Little Rascal nodding its head in agreement. Black lines appeared on Qin Wentian’s face. This Little Rascal was truly a little rascal indeed!

AGM 088 – Impetuousness Of Youth

The snow in the Royal Capital fell unabated, creating an ever thickening layer of snow on the ground. Qin Wentian gazed out from the Divine Weapon Pavilion as he thought in his heart. This snow, when would it stop falling?

Below the pavilion, a figure approached, raising his head and looking at Qin Wentian, “Wentian, I’ve investigated the news you wanted to know about.”

The moment Qin Wentian heard these words, he leaped up into the air from the pavilion, before landing gracefully on the snow-covered ground.

“Uncle Yang, how’s my father?” Qin Wentian had requested the Divine Weapon Pavilion to investigate news about his father, Qin Chuan.

“A few months ago, the news about the occurrences at the banquet was leaked out, and many people had opinions about the way the Royal Clan handled things. After all, the Qin Clan’s ancestry hails from King Wu, a subject that was loyal to Chu Country. Everything that happened was because Chu Tianjiao wanted to force Qin Chuan to plead guilty.” Yang Cheng explained. “Your father naturally did not agree, and thus, the Royal Clan has decided that they would parade Qin Chuan around the Royal Capital two days from now.”

“My father would rather die than to withstand such a

humiliation.” A sharp glint of light flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“That’s what I thought as well. This is just too cruel. Not only that, Qin Yao may not be able to take this lying down. Perhaps they wanted to use your father to lure Qin Yao out of the Emperor Star Academy and continue using Qin Yao to force your father to plead guilty, killing two birds with a single stone.” Yang Chen mumbled in a low voice.

Qin Wentian drew in a huge breath. Chu Tianjiao was way too ruthless.

Qin Wentian was very clear of Qin Chuan’s character. He would rather die than suffer this sort of humiliation.

“Thank you.” Qin Wentian turned his gaze towards the drifting snowflakes in the air. It was unknown exactly what he was thinking.

“Wentian, this is a interspatial ring created with Divine Imprints. This ring is one of the lowest grades of interspatial ring, but you can still store quite a number of things in its spatial storage. Keep this.” Yang Chen passed a stone ring over to Qin Wentian.

After Qin Wentian received the stone ring, he channeled Astral Energy into it. What he discovered made astonishment bloom in his heart. He could sense the spatial storage space within the interspatial ring.

“This ring must’ve been very valuable, right?” Qin Wentian asked Yang Chen.

“In our entire Divine Weapon Pavilion, only one person is able to craft such an item. After all, spatial-type Divine Imprints are extremely rare, and it’s inconceivable difficult to inscribe them.” Yang Chen laughed. Although Yang Chen didn’t directly reply to Qin Wentian, from his answer, Qin Wentian already understood the value of the interspatial ring.

“Uncle Yang, I will accept this then.” Qin Wentian smiled as he regarded Yang Chen.

“Work hard. A 17 year-old genius capable of inscribing 3rd-level Divine Imprints, this is the first time in my life that I’ve heard of it.” Yang Chen patted Qin Wentian on his shoulder before he left the area.

Qin Wentian understood very clearly that the Divine Weapon Pavilion regarded him extremely highly. An expert grandmaster weaponsmith could enjoy almost limitless wealth.

If a 4th-level weaponsmith was truly born in the Chu Country, the commotion it would cause would surely be extremely terrifying. Yuanfu Realm cultivators would surely all flock over to the Chu Country with their requests.

Qin Wentian, without a doubt, had such a potential.

He walked in the direction of the weapon-forging hall, preparing to train his weapon forging abilities.

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The fallen snow around the Royal Capital had a thickness of half a foot. The whole city seemed to be blanketed by a layer of white snow.

One could feel faint traces of coldness in the air.

But even so, around the Royal Capital's Martial Arena, there were crowds of people braving the wind and snow, swamping the area.

It was said that today, the army lead by by the Ye Clan would escort and parade Qin Chuan around the Royal Capital, starting here from the arena, to let the people know of his crimes.

Qin Chuan from the Qin Clan, Sky Harmony City. Would he plead guilty to his crimes on the Martial Arena?

In the distance, a regiment of a few hundred soldiers were escorting a mobile steel cage. Inside of that steel cage was a middle-aged man with unkempt hair. He looked similar to a beggar.

“Qin Chuan of the Qin Clan.” The crowd exclaim in their hearts.

That regiment of troops escorted Qin Chuan to the top of the

arena. A figure mounted on a warhorse rode his mount forward and stopped in front of Qin Chuan.

“Qin Chuan, the Qin Clan ordered their troops to rebel. Why don’t you just plead guilty that the Qin Clan long had the intention to rebel and give us the names and locations of your hidden allies? This way, your suffering would lessen.” That person spoke to Qin Chuan.

Qin Chuan raised his head as he gazed at the other party. A glint of contempt could be seen in his eyes.

“Bai Qingsong, you don’t have the qualifications to speak with me. Scram.” Qin Chuan’s voice was filled with vitality as he stared at Bai Qingsong, his gaze as sharp as swords.

“How impudent.” By the side, a crisp sounding voice rang out. The owner of this voice was none other than Bai Autumn Snow. She was also mounted upon a warhorse. She stared down at Qin Chuan with cold eyes.

“Autumn Snow, you and your father are only qualified to be the lackeys of the Ye Clan. What extraordinary talent do you have? You hadn’t even began to condense your 2nd Astral Soul. If not for my son Wentian, you couldn’t even begin to sense the 3rd Heavenly Layer.” Qin Chuan remarked with a touch of sarcasm. “I was blind previously to have agreed to your marriage proposal. Comparing you to Wentian is akin to comparing a crow to a phoenix.”

“Impudent.” Autumn snow’s countenance turned extremely unsightly, as though Qin Chuan had managed to touch upon her sore point. Qin Chuan was right, she had not yet condensed her 2nd Astral Soul. Based on her own affinity, she could not cast her senses to the 3rd heavenly layer, and as such, she first had to raise her sensory abilities through meditation.. She would never have thought that Qin Chuan, who was imprisoned in the black stronghold, would know about this.

“Today’s parade is commanded by the Ye Clan and the Chu Clan. As for your Bai Clan, you are only fit to do the duties of lackeys.” Despite of being in danger, Qin Chuan had long cast all thoughts of life and death aside.

“Shut your mouth. Qin Wentian is already a dead man.” Yanaro rode his mount over, pointing his finger at Qin Chuan. His Sword Qi gushed forth.

“Since he has no intentions to confess, take him away and start the parade.” Yanaro coldly commanded. In response, the troops assembled into their formations, preparing to parade Qin Chuan around the Royal Capital.

The spectators on both side of the streets looked at the few youths standing in front of the regiment of troops. These were all youngsters, including Yanaro from the Yan Clan, Ye Zhan, and the rest from the Ye Clan. All the great clans had began grooming their youth to train them to handle clan responsibilities in the future. To them, these youths were the clans’ pillar of support.

Within the crowd, there was a female figure who was clad in

white, wearing a conical bamboo hat and tightly clenching her fists. This person was none other than Qin Yao.

Beside Qin Yao, Luo Huan was lightly pulling at her hand, preventing her from committing a foolish act.

“Sister Luo Huan.” Qin Yao gritted her teeth, as struggles arose in her heart.

“Your father would definitely not want to see the events from that day repeating themselves.” Luo Huan whispered.

“But my father had never fear death. He would rather die than suffer such a humiliation.” Qin Yao voice trembled slightly. Luo Huan sighed. “Let’s wait and see for now. I heard news from my teacher that Wentian still lives. Although he has yet to return to the academy, there is a high probability that he will appear here today.”

During their conversation, the secured iron cage on a horse carriage started to move, leaving behind prints of the horse’s tracks on the snow.

The troops escorting Qin Chuan had started their parade.

However, just after the Parade started, a figure appeared in front of them, blocking their way.

The gazes from the crowd were all cast in that direction. On top

of the snow, there was a youth clad in beast-skin clothings, wearing a conical bamboo hat obscuring his features. It was unknown when the youth made his silent and sudden appearance. He gave the people a feeling that he had stood there since the beginning.

Yanaro's glare was as sharp as swords, piercing towards the figure, as he coldly spat, "Qin Wentian!"

As the sound of his voice faded, the hearts of the spectators shuddered with shock. Qin Wentian of the Emperor Star Academy had come?

Qin Yao and Luo Huan also cast their gaze in that direction, and their countenance froze. It truly was Qin Wentian.

"This fellow actually came." Luo Huan sighed. The impetuosity of youth.

However, this kind of impetuosity brought a feeling of warmth to the on-lookers' hearts.

Qin Wentian removed the bamboo hat and tossed the hat away on the snow. In his sight, there was only Qin Chuan. He didn't even look at Yanaro, nor Ye Zhan and Liu Yan, nor Bai Qingsong and Bai Autumn snow.

"Silly child."

As soon as Qin Chuan saw Qin Wentian's skinny figure standing upright in the snow, barring the path of the parade with a determination that disregarded his own safety for the sake of his father, Qin Chuan involuntarily felt the wetness of tears in his eyes.

True men doesn't mean that they did not shed tears, but rather their appearance depended on how emotionally moved they were.

This already was the second time Qin Wentian acted in such a way for him. Qin Chuan cast his gaze at the heavens, looking at the drifting snow, as he lamented in his heart. Since the Heavens had given him such an outstanding son, why must the Heavens still arrange such a cruel twist of fate to torment him so?

"Wentian, since you are alive, why did you come here." Qin Chuan sighed.

A slight smile could be seen in the depths of Qin Wentian's eyes as he replied, "As a son, how could I stay away?"

"I'm already in danger, this is something you cannot change. Why must you be so foolish?" Qin Chuan sighed again.

"As a man, as long as my actions are honorable and upright and I am able to face the Heavens and Earth with no guilt in my heart, that would suffice. Since I know about this, how could I still stay away?" Qin Wentian continued smiling. "At least when I'm here, I won't allow others to humiliate my father."

Within the storm of snow, the youth's figure still stood there in the middle, filled with determination. His words had even slightly moved the hearts of the spectators.

“Wentian, well said.” A crisp sounding voice rang out. Qin Yao also cast aside her bamboo hat, and walked out from the crowd, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Qin Wentian.

“Sister, why are you so silly.” Qin Wentian gazed at Qin Yao, as he gently brushed the snow off her head.

“Aren't you the same?” Qin Yao replied. The two of them cast their gaze upon the regiment of troops.

In response, several silhouettes of the mounted troops appeared, breaking their formations. Their countenance was sharp, and killing intent flickered in their eyes.

“Detain them.” Yanaro commanded. With the force of a raging wind, the soldiers galloped on their mounts towards Qin Wentian and Qin Yao.

The snow on the ground flew about, drifting in the wind. From the presence the soldiers exuded, one could tell that all of them had a cultivation base at the Arterial Circulation Realm. This clearly indicated the might of the escort troops selected to escort the parade.

“Sister, allow me.” Qin Wentian pulled Qin Yao behind his back

as he stood in front alone, staring at the warhorses galloping towards him.

In the depths of Qin Wentian's determined eyes, a glint of light sharper than a keep sword could be seen shining forth!

AGM 089 – The Silhouette Behind

The warhorses galloped forth as their hooves echoed out against the snow-covered ground. A terrifying aura of sharpness seemed to emanate forth from the spears they wielded, and even before the mounted soldiers arrived, their spears, akin to a poisonous viper, had already pierced out towards Qin Wentian while emitting a wailing shrill.

The snowy ground cracked under the force, as Qin Wentian stomped his foot, causing the frost and snow to fly about. A terrifying aura gushed forth from him. Qin Wentian stood straight and tall, appearing incomparably majestic.

“Chi.....” From the left and right, two spears stabbed forth. The attacking soldiers only felt a violent wind billowing on their body as the frost and snow danced about, obscuring their vision. In that instant of momentary blindness, Qin Wentian exploded forth in motion.

Abruptly, it was as if both of their long spears were grabbed by a terrifying force.

“Scram.”

The immense, terrifying force flung their bodies backwards, sending them knocking into the other soldiers galloping forwards. In the blink of an eye, the impact caused the row of soldiers behind the two attackers to fall from their mounts and crash on to the ground.

Qin Wentian strolled slowly onwards, as his gaze landed onto Yanaro, as well as Bai Qingsong and his clan members. He would never have thought that Bai Qingsong would appear here today.

Another row of soldiers galloped forth, only to hear Yanaro speaking in a calm voice, "Let me deal with him."

The soldiers halted their steps. In their place, Yanaro rode his mount forward and stopped in front of Qin Wentian, looking down at him from a height.

"Twice in a row, our battle had no conclusion. Since you did not die then today I shall deliver your death." Yanaro calmly spoke. Even though Yanaro was at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, Yanaro could never defeat Qin Wentian. This humiliation had always persisted on his mind. Now, after a few months of hard work, his innate technique had grown stronger. His cultivation base had also risen to the peak of the 7th level.

His martial prowess could be said to be increased by one level. Today, Yanaro would ensure that Qin Wentian died under his sword.

Yanaro released his Sword-type Astral Soul. This was his 2nd Astral Soul, hailing from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. Not only did his body emit a terrifying Sword Qi, his glare was also as sharp as swords.

Even the drifting snowflakes dancing about were all sliced into

nothingness by the Sword Qi he emitted.

“Yanaro’s Fragmented Sword innate technique has already been cultivated to the third level. This battle will surely be without suspense. No matter how much Qin Wentian has improved, he would still die in Yanaro’s hands.” A youthful soldier remarked, causing the rest of the spectators to nod their heads.

“He should have died long ago.” A cold glint of light flashed in Bai Qingsong’s eyes. Qin Wentian actually survived until today? A miracle indeed.

“Bai Qingsong, my Wentian even dares to face off against a regiment of troops on his own. As for you and your daughter, Autumn Snow, you can only live off the scraps of others, living sneakily like a thief.” Qin Chuan’s sarcastic voice sounded out, which caused the Bai Qingsong’s countenance to turn to frost. He glared at Qin Chuan and replied, “Just wait for his death, I want to see what you say then.”

Yanaro dismounted, and as he took a step forwards, the Sword Qi he released wailed, creating a cacophony of keens. Between the two of them, the snow danced about relentlessly.

“Since you want to seek death so much, today I shall grant you your wish.” Yanaro’s hand was formed in the shape of a sword. A monstrously sharp sword intent could be felt emanating outwards.

“What a strong aura.” The spectators saw Yanaro stepping forwards, while Qin Wentian remained motionless, as though he

had turned into a statue.

“You are not worthy.” As Qin Wentian stepped forth, the snow on the ground scattered. A domineering aura blasted forth from his figure. This did not originate from any type of energy, but belonged to he himself alone.

Although he didn’t possess any ultimate techniques, the aura Qin Wentian exuded was comparable to that of a top-tier exponent. His aura felt carefree and unrestrained, and hid within it a hint of duty.

“Hmm?” Yanaro narrowed his eyes, but he soon resumed his cold smile.

“Aura blast? Mere parlor tricks, unable to withstand a single strike.” Yanaro continued walking forwards slowly. It was as though that his Sword Qi could tear apart space for every step he took.

“I wonder.” Qin Wentian released his first Astral Soul, and momentarily after, a Heavenly Hammer materialized in his hands. He continued standing there calmly, like a majestic mountain. Regardless of how domineering the Sword Qi was, it was unable to conquer him. He was simply unmovable.

While at the same time, the aura pressure of Qin Wentian’s 6th level of Arterial Circulation, also blasted forth. His eyes shone with a light similar to the glow of the constellations, piercing towards Yanaro and causing him to slightly quiver.

In the depths of Qin Wentian's eyes, Yanaro saw an overwhelming sense of confidence, perseverance, and even dominance. Just seeing that was enough to cause someone to involuntarily feel tiny and inconsequential.

"Boom." Qin Wentian strode forwards. Yanaro's heart lurched as the sound of Qin Wentian's first step echoed out.

"Although his current cultivation base is at the 6th level, I don't believe he'll be able to pressure me." Yanaro silently stated in his heart. With this in mind, he continued walking forwards. His Sword Qi keened in anger, seemingly coalescing into something visible, as everything around him got lacerated to nothingness.

"This battle would surely be one without suspense. Qin Wentian is already a dead man." The crowd speculated in their hearts after feeling the aura Yanaro was emanating. Strangely enough, they were unable to feel the pressure beating down on Yanaro from Qin Wentian's single step. That was why they were so confident in their analysis that Yanaro was going to be the victor

And finally, when they were only a step apart. Yanaro pierced straight ahead with his finger, and in the middle of the air, the energy of the sword-finger transformed into the shape of numerous sharp short swords that exploded forth into motion.

It was as though the tension had shattered into fragments at this moment. Qin Wentian, was a dead man.

“Boom.” The Heavenly Hammer in Qin Wentian’s hand swung out without any elaborate techniques, with only pure strength. As the Heavenly Hammer appeared in Yanaro’s eyes, he felt that as if, he had sunk into a quagmire of an illusion. It was as though an enormous mountain containing boundless strength had appeared in front of his eyes, emitting a fearsome pressure that blasted straight towards him, wanting to bury him under overwhelming might.

“No.....” Yanaro’s presence to seemed to deflate. In that instant, Qin Wentian actually caused him to feel that he was in absolute danger.

“Rumble!”

The Heavenly Hammer smashed against the short swords, destroying them. Yanaro was forced backwards from the impact. Meanwhile, Qin Wentian steadily advanced and sent out another palm strike.

“What’s going on?” Upon witnessing what was happening, the countenance of the spectators froze in shock. Between the two combatants, Yanaro was actually the weaker party. Qin Wentian’s attacks seemed to contain an imposing, majestic aura to it. It was akin to a formless pressure. Although his innate techniques were not that strong to a point where they could be called ultimate attacks, each and every single one of his attacks seemed to contain a pressure that could rival innate techniques with the power to destroy the Heavens and to decimate the Earth.

Yanaro raised his hands to unleash another attack, but this attack

of his contained none of his presence from before. And as the sounds of the impact rang out, his palms were already trembling from the backlash. Yanaro's countenance underwent a drastic change upon realizing that Qin Wentian had already locked down one of his arms.

“This was the arm that pointed at my Father, right? Now, this arm is mine.”

Qin Wentian coldly snorted as his palms wavered. At the same time, Yanaro let out a blood-curdling shriek. One of his arms was shattered on the spot by Qin Wentian.

“How is this possible?” The spectators' expressions were all frozen in shock. The mighty Yanaro had one of his arms broken in a single exchange when facing Qin Wentian?

For a moment, all of the spectators, including the troops escorting Qin Chuan, didn't know how to react.

“How dare you.” A few voices were raised in rage, as the soldiers on the warhorses prepared themselves to rush at Qin Wentian. At the same time, a silhouette appeared, soaring through the skies, hovering in the air.

This indicated that among the regiment of troops escorting Qin Chuan was a Yuanfu cultivator.

Qin Wentian raised his head as he stared at the figure in the air,

only to see that figure gathering his energy, condensing it into the form of a golden halo, blasting towards Qin Wentian. However, at the same exact moment when the golden halo was condensed, a faint shadow of a gigantic arm manifested in the air and flew towards the golden halo. A thunderous sound rang out as both of the manifestations exploded at the same instant. Another figure soared to the skies, blocking the previous Yuanfu cultivator.

“The Heaven Fist technique. Who are you?” The enemy Yuanfu cultivator questioned.

The other figure merely replied in an unperturbed voice, “No one is allowed to touch Qin Wentian.”

“Today, he actually dared to rescue a prisoner. The price for doing so, is death.” The eyes of the enemy Yuanfu Cultivator seemed to flicker with a sharp, golden light.

Simultaneously, the warhorses on the ground rushed towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian’s body erupted into motion. Stomping the ground, Qin Wentian transformed into a blur of shadows, and as he rushed forwards, a silvery long spear appeared in his hands.

“Kill!” The sharp glint of light in Qin Wentian’s eyes flashed out. Roaring in rage, he hurled the silvery spear out like a torpedo of silver lightning.

“Chi, chi, chi.....” The silvery spear penetrated through the throats of the soldiers with overwhelming strength and speed. Blood fell from the skies, dyeing the snow-covered ground a blood-red hue.

In an instant, an entire line of soldiers perished.

As the other soldiers on the side rushed over, a 2nd Divine Weapon appeared in Qin Wentian’s hand. This weapon was none other than an ancient looking chinese halberd.

Seeing one of the soldier’s long spear piercing towards him, Qin Wentian stepped forth, as the ancient halberd in his hands exploded forth with a momentum. An instant later, the ancient halberd pierced through and pulverised the enemy’s heart.

The sounds of the warhorses galloping, as well as the movements of the other soldiers, instantly ceased. The scene whereby the ancient halberd impaled through the heart of one of their comrades exuded an tyrannical and dominant aura, giving them pause.

“Whoever dares to block my way, dies.” Qin Wentian roared in anger. The troop of soldiers were all quiet due to fear, their gaze trembling as they stare at Qin Wentian.

As the two Yuanfu cultivators fought each other with an explosive flurry of exchanges in the air, the ground was silent. Everyone was staring at the blood leaking out of the corpse that had been impaled by Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd.

“How powerful.” The surrounding spectators never would have thought that youth before them possessed such a level of power.

The youth’s skinny frame stood there like an ancient tree. As for the Yanaro who was stomped under his feet, it was as though everyone had already forgotten about his existence.

“Interspatial ring.” The crowd couldn’t help but whisper when they realized that both the silver spear and the ancient halberd appeared out of nowhere. Obviously, Qin Wentian was in possession of a interspatial ring.

For ordinary humans, it was utterly impossible for them to have such a treasure.

At this moment, beside the iron cage that housed Qin Chuan, an old man stepped out, walking towards Qin Wentian.

“Wentian, be careful! This old man is a Yuanfu Realm cultivator.” Qin Chuan shouted. That old man was his jailer, which why he was certain about the old man’s level of cultivation.

A sinister look flashed across the countenance of that old man as he approached closer and closer. At this moment, a silhouette appeared near Qin Wentian. The moment it appeared, the old man abruptly halted his steps. He looked at the owner of that silhouette before shifting his gaze to the Yuanfu Realm cultivator battling in the air.

Who in the world, actually dared to support Qin Wentian?!

AGM 090 – The Will Of The Emperor Star Academy

Snowflakes danced about in the sky. The gazes of the spectators all landed onto the youth's body, only to see him calmly standing there, wielding an ancient halberd in his hand as he looked in front of him..

Today, even if he was unable to save Qin Chuan, he had to use his actions to indicate his attitude.

He, Qin Wentian, would never allow Qin Chuan to suffer humiliation.

Naturally, the youth had greater confidence in himself than before. With his cultivation base at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation, he easily squashed Yanaro under his foot. Not only that, he possessed a valuable interspatial ring and seemed as though he had a plethora of Divine Weapons.

The most important factor, though, was the Yuanfu cultivator standing behind him.

That sinister-looking old man stared at the silhouette behind Qin Wentian, as he coldly asked, "You don't seem familiar."

"As a old man, you shouldn't interfere too much in matters of the younger generation." The voice belonging to the silhouette behind Qin Wentia, calmly replied, causing the old man's countenance to

turn extremely chilly.

At this moment, Yanaro picked himself up. One of his hand slumped uselessly to the side as he coldly glared at Qin Wentian before turning, wanting to depart the area.

“Did I allow you to leave?” Qin Wentian open his mouth and stated. Yanaro froze, and with a gaze as sharp as swords, he turned again and glared at Qin Wentian. However, the moment their eyes met, Yanaro’s heart involuntarily violently shuddered with fear.

However, Qin Wentian didn’t even bother to look at him.

This was a type of extreme disdain. In Qin Wentian’s eyes, Yanaro no longer existed.

Yanaro could still clearly remember the day when he had injured Qin Wentian with a flick of his finger. During then, he stood in front of Qin Wentian, looking down on him with contempt. If it were not for the appearance of Senior Rain, Qin Wentian would surely have had to crawl away that day.

But now, Qin Wentian exuded an even more tyrannical presence when facing him.

Inside the iron cage, Qin Chuan’s eyes flickered with a brilliant glow as he gazed at Qin Wentian. His son had finally grown up.

“Bai Qingsong, do you regret your actions?” Qin Chuan intoned

in a low voice, causing Bai Qingsong who was beside him to tremble. Did he regret it? He once thought that his daughter, Autumn Snow, was a phoenix among humans. But only after he came to the Royal Capital did he realised that Autumn Snow's talent was not as amazing as he had always thought. Especially when confronted with so many geniuses, the light of Autumn snow's talent was not as bright as he had expected.

While standing on the snowy ground, the youth that was wielding the ancient halberd had already grown to such a stage where he dared to confront an army by himself.

In front of the Martial Arena, another regiment of troops cleared the path. A few other silhouettes were leisurely strolling over at this moment.

These individuals were all extremely youthful, and the one in the lead was none other than the 3rd Prince of Chu Country – Chu Tianjiao.

The two others standing on the left and right side of him both possessed an extraordinary demeanour.

The one on the left was proud and aloof, outstanding and unrivalled. This person was none other than the demon of Emperor Star Academy – Luo Qianqiu.

While the one on the right was clad in green and looked slightly younger than 20. Possessing inconceivable good looks, his hair draped over his shoulders, and his eyes were extremely clear and

sharp.

“Ye Clan, Ye Wuque.”

People easily recognised them. These three person, each of them was extraordinary. Chu Tianjiao, ranked 2nd among the ten prodigies of the Royal Capital. Ye Wuque; during last year, he was ranked as the 5th. But now, his level of power was unclear, it was unknown whether he had broken through to Yuanfu. If he already broke through, it was highly probable that his ranking would advance.

The 3rd person, Luo Qianqiu. He's the youngest among the three of them, but his potential is the highest! He would definitely be ranked among the ten prodigies within a year's time.

These three person, any one of them was outstanding no matter where they went, but when they appeared together, it was as if their presence exuded a light so radiant that it would immediately draw the attention of others.

“Are you guys sure that you want to do this?” A light smile was displayed on Chu Tianjiao's face. No one knew exactly what he racing through his mind as he spoke to the figure standing behind Qin Wentian.

“Your Highness, Qin Wentian is untouchable.” The Yuanfu cultivator standing behind Qin Wentian calmly replied.

“Today, he tried to save a condemned prisoner. The price for this action is death. What if I want to touch him?” Chu Tianjiao’s unperturbed voice contained a vague sense of force.

Previously, in the Dark Forest, Chu Tianjiao’s plan did not succeed. Not only that, both Qin Wentian and Qin Yao were still alive.

And currently, Qin Wentian actually displayed overwhelming strength, causing havoc while trying to save Qin Chuan. Such a person, if they were destined to be enemies, it would be better to remove him before his talent blossomed.

“If the 3rd Prince, your Highness, really wants to deal with him, I have no choice but to warn your Highness that in the Chu Country, there are some things best kept untarnished.” From a distance, a voice drifted over from a silhouette wearing a bamboo hat with his head lowered, standing amidst the falling snow.

Chu Tianjiao’s gaze instantly sharpened as he stared at the silhouette standing in the snow.

The silhouette stood there alone, as though he was the only existence in the world.

However, although he was only one man, he was the representative of a fearsome power.

“Such as?” Chu Tianjiao’s gaze surveyed that person, his voice

still remaining unperturbed. No matter what the situation was, it was as though Chu Tianjiao would always be able to maintain his calm. Such a person was truly terrifying.

“Such as the will of the Emperor Star Academy.”

The silhouette in the snow slowly raised his head. As the sound of his voice faded, a violent gust of wind billowed. A storm of wind and snow blasted towards the direction of the crowd as a baleful killing intent permeated the atmosphere.

The threat represented behind this voice, was as clear as day. Such as the will of the Emperor Star Academy....

It was as if the personification of the Emperor Star Academy itself stood in front of 3rd Prince of Chu, indicating their stance towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian was simply untouchable. This was the will of the Emperor Star Academy.

A sharp glint of light flickered in Chu Tianjiao's eyes, as he stared straight at the representative. It was as though a silent battle of wills were being fought, their stares as their weapon, creating a palpable sense of pressure and tension in the air.

“If there's someone who is willing to ignore or even break the will of the Emperor Star Academy, then, the academy will definitely make the culprit pay a price so great that it's

unbearable.”

The silhouette standing in the snow replied. His words' sharp tone was unmistakable, representing the will of the Emperor Star Academy. Immovable and undefiable.

From today onwards, Qin Wentian's life and death was tied to the will of the Emperor Star Academy. No one was allowed to disregard it.

Chu Tianjiao remained silent. This time around, he had never expected that the Emperor Star Academy would so strongly stand out, insisting on supporting Qin Wentian.

Next to Chu Tianjiao, Luo Qianqiu's eyes flickered with lightning.

What will of the academy? Was the Emperor Star Academy going to assist Qin Wentian?

If that was the case, the academy was his enemy as well.

For the first time, Luo Qianqiu seriously cast Qin Wentian a glance.

No one was allowed to obstruct the path he wanted to take, not even the Emperor Star Academy.

Inside of the iron cage, the joy in Qin Chuan's eyes grew denser and denser, as hot tears of happiness flowed down his face. He knew that the voice belonging to the silhouette standing in the snow was comparable to a decree that no one would dare to flout. From today onwards, no one would dare to touch Qin Wentian.

From this moment onwards, Qin Wentian's status had changed. He was recognised by the Emperor Star Academy, and would become a member of their 'will'.

Qin Wentian's future would certainly be radiant.

At this moment, a calm smile appeared on the face of Qin Wentian. He knew that from now onwards, the Emperor Star Academy would truly pull out all stops and was determined to support him.

It wasn't that easy to achieve such a high level of recognition. Even during that day when he released both his 3rd Heavenly Layer and 4th Heavenly Layer Astral Soul, the Emperor Star Academy merely 'noticed' his talent. The treatment he was given then was completely different from how he would be treated now. Even when facing the 3rd Prince of Chu, the Emperor Star Academy would still be willing to clash head on with him, even adding in the sentence – "The academy would definitely make the culprit pay a price so great that it's unbearable."

This was the same as telling Chu Tianjiao "If you dared to ignore or break the will of the Emperor Star Academy, the consequences will be disastrous."

“Does the Emperor Star Academy mean that Qin Wentian can stomp on the pride and dignity of my Chu Country whenever and however he pleases?” Chu Tianjiao stared straight ahead, breaking his silence.

“Since your Highness has already detained Qin Chuan, is there a need to humiliate him so much? I believe that your Highness won’t forget the contributions of the Qin Clan’s ancestor, King Wu – Qin Wu. Now that you are using such methods to deal with his descendants, it would really caused the hearts of the loyal subjects to turn chilly. How would they rest assured, not knowing when it would be their turn to be treated like this?” The person behind Qin Wentian continued. “Not only that, the reason why Qin Wentian is here today is due to the fact that he didn’t want his father to be humiliated, not because he wanted to rescue the prisoner. If this was the case, how would he stomp on the pride and dignity of Chu?”

“Okay, so according to you, how should today’s matter be settled?” Chu Tianjiao continued looking at the representative.

“What does your Highness have in mind?” The representative asked in response.

An extremely cold light could be seen flickering in the depths of Chu Tianjiao’s eyes. However, at this moment. Luo Qianqiu was the one who spoke instead. “Since both Qin Wentian and I are from the Emperor Star Academy, I truly want to take a look at what extraordinary qualities he has to be able to be protected by the Emperor Star Academy to such an extent.”

“If he can receive three of my attacks, today, I will spare him from death.”

Luo Qianqiu calmly stated, causing the eyes of the spectators to all land onto Luo Qianqiu.

Luo Qianqiu was not Yanaro. If he really were to make a move, Qin Wentian would surely be in danger.

“Fine.” Chu Tianjiao agreed.

“First things first. You do not have the qualifications to say that you can spare me from death. And secondly, if I am able to receive three of your attacks, I need a promise from his Highness, the 3rd Prince, that from now onwards, my father cannot be ill-treated and never be subjected to such humiliation ever again.”

Qin Wentian replied. This was his stance. Even before he knew the Emperor Star Academy would support him, he was already determined to do this in his heart, no matter the difficulty.

He wanted a promise. He wanted that, before he had the power to rescue his father, Qin Chuan would not be subjected to any forms of ill treatment or humiliation.

He knew that with his current position and status, despite both the Emperor Star Academy and the Divine Weapon Pavilion’s willingness to be his aegis, he was still unable to declare enmity

and clash directly with the Chu Country for the sake of saving Qin Chuan.

Indeed, this incident would have too many repercussions if he acted in this manner.

“I promise you.” Luo Qianqiu slowly strolled out. A terrifying pressure gushed forth, as arcs of lightning were visible in the air. Luo Qianqiu, directly agreed to Qin Wentian’s request in Chu Tianjiao’s place.

The snow on the ground disintegrated into dust, as Luo Qianqiu blasted his aura outwards. 8th level of Arterial Circulation!

As the sound of his voice faded, he prepared to make his move. In his view, Qin Wentian did not possess the qualification to stand before him.

Qin Wentian, protected by the will of the Emperor Star Academy?

He truly wanted to take a look at the person the Emperor Star Academy wanted to support, even going so far as to oppose him, Luo Qianqiu!

AGM 091 – Obsessiveness

Domineering, arrogant, and tyrannical. This was Luo Qianqiu.

He even dare to promise Qin Wentian, thereby making the decision on behalf of the 3rd Prince. But because of his worth, Chu Tianjiao wouldn't hold it against him.

Naturally, Chu Tianjiao also trusted Luo Qianqiu; he was filled with boundless confidence as Luo Qianqiu strode out.

The regiment of troops surrounding Qin Wentian rapidly retreated. Soon after, there were only two people standing on that snowy path: Luo Qianqiu and Qin Wentian.

“Kacha.....” A ray of lightning erupted forth and basked Luo Qianqiu's body. His Astral Energy contained the lightning-elemental properties, so the Astral Soul he had condensed was naturally from one of the lightning-type constellations.

With Luo Qianqiu in the center, the snow around him disintegrated, accompanied by loud explosions. That aura of his caused many to sigh in their hearts and silently state that Luo Qianqiu was a monster.

“No wonder he was one of Emperor Star Academy's monstrous geniuses. Luo Qianqiu, with his current cultivation at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, already has more than enough qualifications to enter the ranks of the ten prodigies of the Royal Capital. For Qin Wentian to receive three of his attacks, this may

be even more terrifying than a nightmare.”

The spectators silently exclaimed in their hearts, only to see Qin Wentian stowing away the ancient halberd. Since it was merely three attacks, he didn't need to borrow the augmentation effects of Divine Weapons.

Columns of lightning lighted up the entire space. Every step that Luo Qianqiu took exuded an aura so overwhelmingly tyrannical that the spectators felt he could instantly crush Qin Wentian.

Without delaying any further, Luo Qianqiu stabbed five of his fingers forwards, as his body exploded into motion, instantly appearing before Qin Wentian. At that moment, the spectators only saw a manifestation of a thunder python flying over, seeking to devour Qin Wentian. The power it emitted felt as though it was capable of destroying all matter.

However, Qin Wentian also responded simultaneously by blasting forth his Revolving Sea Imprints formed from his Divine Energy. Qin Wentian's superpositioned palm imprints contained enough might to topple mountains and overturn seas! However, as thunderous explosive sounds echoed, the stacks of palm imprints were enveloped and easily punctured by the arcs of lightning, crumbling upon the impact. Qin Wentian only felt his body go numb, as a wave of the remnant energies swept against his body and forced him back a total of ten metres.

Despite of this, Qin Wentian's posture still remained straight-backed and upright. His eyes were still looking straight at Luo Qianqiu.

“The first attack.” Luo Qianqiu retracted his five fingers, as he continued leisurely strolling forwards. His long hair fluttering in the wind, his robes, as white as snow.

He was Luo Qianqiu. As for Qin Wentian in front of him, he was nothing but a stepping stone. Only by harshly stomping on this stepping stone could he show the Emperor Star Academy that they were wrong.

The Emperor Star Academy wanted to nurture monstrous talents to obstruct his plan? Impossible.

With less than two months remaining, the last month of this year would be his moment of glory. According to his plan, he would by then step into the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. This feat was once accomplished by his father. However, Luo Qianqiu’s ambition naturally would not merely stop at ascending the 7th level.

In Luo Qianqiu’s eyes, there was no Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian had no way of withstanding even the first attack. If that were the case, as for the remaining two other attacks, Qin Wentian’s fate had already been sealed.

When Luo Qianqiu once again neared Qin Wentian, the snow around him danced about madly in the air. Luo Qianqiu’s eyes seemed to contain the might of lightning as they pierced straight into the eyes of Qin Wentian. His palm once again exploded forth.

This time around, Luo Qianqiu was akin to a god of thunder; everything before him was destined to be decimated.

The circular arterial pathways in Qin Wentian's body were howling. His eyes showed no fear when he stared straight into the eyes of Luo Qianqiu, as surging torrents of energy frenziedly gathered and flowed to his arms.

“Emptiness Imprint.” Qin Wentian roared. This was the 3rd Imprint recorded in the Thousand Hands Imprint innate technique. The Emptiness Imprint siphoned all the energy that was circulating in his circular arterial paths and exploded forth, breaking apart all falsehood and illusions, disintegrating everything in its path.

Both of their attacks collided together, causing a storm of an overwhelming pressure of vibration to resonate outwards. With them in the centre, the snow in their surroundings was dragged up and spun about in a spiral, creating a tornado that danced frenziedly in the air.

Unlike the last time, Qin Wentian's steps were as steady as a mountain.

“Get lost.” Luo Qianqiu howl in rage.

“Scram.” Qin Wentian also roared in anger. Both of their bodies were blasted backwards. However, Luo Qianqiu were only forced to retreat a single step while Qin Wentian was forced back over ten steps. From this, one could see the disparity between their levels in

cultivation.

Qin Wentian only felt his body shuddering. It was as though the terrifying lightning shock entered his body and wanted to destroy him from the inside out.

However, when he raised his eyes, a clarity could be seen alongside an unbreakable determination and resoluteness. No matter what happened, his heart would not waver.

The spectators all felt great waves of shock in their hearts. Never would they have expected that Qin Wentian was actually able to withstand Luo Qianqiu's second attack. Based on the degree of power generated earlier by Luo Qianqiu, even for those at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, they would also have no way to defend against that strike and would have ended up grievously injured.

Because of the attack, there were no longer any traces of fallen snow beneath their feet.

As the chilly wind billowed, Luo Qianqiu's snow-white robes fluttered in the wind. He was actually forced back a single step! To him, this was a humiliation.

Despite it being only a single step.

Despite the fact that Qin Wentian's innate technique was extraordinary and was of the earth-grade.

None of that meant anything to him. He was Luo Qianqiu, all of his cultivation arts and innate techniques were extraordinarily powerful as well. His Astral Souls also contained explosive elements within. He should not have been forced backwards, nor did he have any reason to be.

“The third attack, are you ready?” Luo Qianqiu raised his head, regarding Qin Wentian, as sound of his lofty, arrogant voice drifted out. It was as though this question was a declaration that the battle was about to end. His second Astral Soul had also been released, and his Astral Energy, with the properties of lightning and thunder, crackled and howled like a demon in his body.

This strike, for certain, would utterly decimate Qin Wentian.

“Boom.”

However, Qin Wentian abruptly stepped forth while releasing both of his Astral Souls. The six circular arterial pathways in his body were frenziedly channeling and circulating energy, resulting in a sound akin to the ocean’s roaring waves.

“Hmm?” The countenance of the spectators froze. In the blink of an eye, Qin Wentian soared through the skies with a single leap, moving with the force of a tornado and the speed of lightning, like a Garuda spreading its wings.

“Impossible.” The pupils of the spectators narrowed. Only those at Yuanfu could fly, but Qin Wentian was actually soaring through

the air!

Even Luo Qianqiu was stunned. However, he didn't have the time to be astonished, because at this moment, Qin Wentian had already descended. Qin Wentian's eyes flickered with a radiance, as his long hair fluttered with the wind. In the depths of Qin Wentian's eyes, Luo Qianqiu could see a will that was powerful enough to extinguish the Heavens and demolish the Earth. This will transformed into an image was directly branded itself into Luo Qianqiu's mind.

“How swift.” The expression on the faces of the spectators remained frozen. This time around, Qin Wentian did not passively defend, but instead took the initiative to attack.

The figure that had descended from the skies utilised the entirety of his pool of energy and blasted forth a palm strike. This palm strike was formed based on the concept of the Emptiness Imprint, and emanated forth with a pressure that was as heavy as countless mountains, crushing Luo Qianqiu.

The moment Luo Qianqiu felt the pressure, his countenance stiffened.

Luo Qianqiu was too arrogant. He still assumed that for his third attack, Qin Wentian would stand by passively, waiting to defend against his strongest strike. However, he overestimated himself and underestimated Qin Wentian.

In the instant before the attack landed, Luo Qianqiu didn't have

the time to think. He could only send both of his palms out, exploding forth with tyrannical lightning energy, seeking to annihilate everything. However, the determination in Qin Wentian's heart could never be annihilated.

“Peng!”

The terrifying remnants of the clashing energies almost caused Luo Qianqiu's body to be bent and fall to the ground.. The mountain of pressure was too strong to defend against, even for him. Even now, he could feel his body shuddering violently from the impact.

“That was the third attack.” Qin Wentian was incomparably domineering as he stared at Luo Qianqiu.

“Screw off.” Luo Qianqiu howled in anger. Boundless amounts of energies coalesced into the form of a lightning sword, slashing down towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian's countenance froze, but his left palm wavered, sending out the manifestation of a mountain. The sword made of lightning sliced through the heavy mountain, as the body of Qin Wentian was catapulted through the air, before he smashed heavily against the ground, spitting out a mouthful of fresh blood.

“This is your fourth attack.” Qin Wentian lifted his head. He looked towards Luo Qianqiu, along with the other spectators.

Three attacks, Luo Qianqiu didn't manage to subdue Qin Wentian in three attacks. Not only that, they were on even ground

after their fourth exchange of blows.

Looking at the splendour of the two Astral Souls Qin Wentian released, the spectators had a surreal feel. To think that Qin Wentian's martial prowess had already reached such a terrifying level.

Although he was injured at the end of the exchange, the injury doesn't seem to have any impact in marring the brilliance he displayed.

His name was Qin Wentian. Once this battle ended, his name would be forever established.

In addition to the 3rd and 4th Heavenly Layer Astral Souls, a high level of martial prowess, a resolute personality, and the support of the Emperor Star Academy behind his back, Qin Wentian was like to a shining star whose radiance gradually lit up the night skies.

"You are very intelligent." Luo Qianqiu spoke after a while, breaking the silence yet still maintaining his earlier arrogance.

"You hid your strongest strike until the last moment, catching me unawares and thus sparing you from the nightmare." Luo Qianqiu slowly continued, "I have to say that the current you already possesses enough qualifications for me to look at you. However, this is a one-off incident. There will be no next time. During our next clash in the future, you will no longer have any opportunities."

Even now, Luo Qianqiu's words were tinged with his pride and arrogance.

The eyes of the spectators all landed on his body. There was no mistake. He was the demon of the Emperor Star Academy – Luo Qianqiu.

So what even if Qin Wentian had an extremely high level of martial prowess? In front of him, Qin Wentian was nothing. If this was a real fight, there would be one ending – Qin Wentian's demise.

Despite of Luo Qianqiu's arrogance, the eyes of Qin Wentian remained unperturbed.

“The first time I met you in the Emperor Star Academy was the day you shamelessly proclaimed yourself the owner of the Blood Ember Fruits. At that moment, your level of power far exceeded mine.”

“The second time in the Dark Forest, on Chu Tianjiao's orders, you pursued me all the way, and if not for the arrival of the horde of demonic beasts, you would have succeeded because then, your level of power also far exceeded mine.”

“Today was the third time we met. You weren't able to defeat me in three attacks, and even went against the earlier agreement, executing a fourth strike. But now, you even had the gall to remain so arrogant.”

“Then, let me tell you this. The next time we battle, I will show you how laughable and pitiful your so called ‘pride’ and ‘arrogance’ are.”

Qin Wentian replied slowly, his eyes full of resolution and determination.

He, too, possessed his own kind of pride. This was the third clash he had with Luo Qianqiu. The next time they fought, he would wipe clean the slate and make Luo Qianqiu pay the price for his arrogance.

This was his pride, and his will.

The spectators cast their gazes over at the youth who had established himself today. That hotblooded youth, with his heart akin to a ferocious tiger! Today, Qin Wentian did indeed have the qualifications to be proud of his achievements!

AGM 092 – Gratitude

Luo Qianqiu stared at Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian's words didn't cause his expression to waver in the slightest. Luo Qianqiu's background was way different from those who grew up in the Chu Country.

Since young, he had seen too many geniuses and heard too many bold, visionary words. Naturally, he had also met many others whose talents in cultivation were so great that they could also be termed as demons. He was very clear that actions speak louder words, regardless of how impressive those words sounded.

Luo Qianqiu martial heart was incomparably resolute, and would never ever waver the slightest because of a few words from Qin Wentian. In his eyes, Qin Wentian was merely a passerby.

After he accomplish his mission in the Emperor Star Academy, he would depart from Chu Country and compete in a much grander stage, tempering himself with other monstrous geniuses.

Indeed, the Chu Country was too small to contain Luo Qianqiu.

“At the end of this year, there will be a grand banquet. I will wait for you there.” Luo Qianqiu spoke as he looked towards Qin Wentian, causing the spectators to freeze.

Naturally, they knew what was the grand banquet Luo Qianqiu was referring to. In this cultivation-oriented world, each country would hold a national grand banquet at the end of the year to

emphasize cultivation. As long as you were a citizen of the Chu Country, below 30 years of age, and had a cultivation base that was below Yuanfu, you would be able to attend.

This custom of emphasizing the importance of cultivation was passed down unceasingly from generation to generation to spur the younger generations onwards. And because this banquet was held once every year, many people would have the opportunity to improve themselves there.

As for cultivators of the Yuanfu realm, they would not attend this, because they have no purpose being there.

Luo Qianqiu returned to Chu Tianjiao's side. Qin Wentian did not bother too much with Luo Qianqiu's words, as he cast his gaze over to Chu Tianjiao.

"I have already survived three attacks. I hope that your Highness can give me a promise." Qin Wentian calmly spoke.

"Yanaro, you can come over here now." Chu Tianjiao exclaimed. Yanaro nodded his head, and walked to the side of Chu Tianjiao. However, his head was lowered throughout the short journey because he knew that he had lost all his face.

"Qin Wentian." Chu Tianjiao regarded Qin Wentian with a slight smile on his face.

"If I didn't guess wrongly, you should be the rumored genius grandmaster in the Divine Weapon Pavilion who could inscribe 3rd level imprints, am I right?" Chu Tianjiao calmly smiled as he gazed

at the two Yuanfu cultivators standing beside Qin Wentian.

“The young genius grandmaster? Qin Wentian?”

The hearts of the spectators trembled as their gazes landed on Qin Wentian.

“You are right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head lightly, with no intentions to mask anything. He knew that he could never hide the truth from Chu Tianjiao.

“As for the earlier matter, I can ignore your interference. And as for the Ye Clan and Ou Clan, I can also negotiate with them for you. As long as you stop interfering in the matters of the Qin Clan., I’m even willing to help you cultivate.” Chu Tianjiao spoke abruptly. No one expected that he would say that.

As the crowd regarded the handsome-looking face that was adorned with a smile, they couldn’t help but sigh. The 3rd Prince of the Chu Country, Chu Tianjiao, was indeed a dragon among men. As long as Qin Wentian agreed, he could forget all that happened and even help Qin Wentian.

This was a chance for Qin Wentian.

As long as he agreed, Chu Tianjiao was willing to let go of all past grievances and even offer to serve as the mediator and settle the matter with the Ye Clan and Ou Clan. Moreover, as long as he agreed, he and Chu Tianjiao could be friends.

The only condition was that Qin Wentian was not to interfere in matters of the Qin Clan ever again. This was because the only source of conflict between Chu Tianjiao and Qin Wentian was their stance regarding the Qin Clan.

As long as he relinquished all ties to the Qin Clan, a glorious future awaited him.

He was someone who gained the recognition of the Emperor Star Academy and enjoyed the protection of the Divine Weapon Pavilion while being a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist. The current Qin Wentian had many laurels of light associated with his name.

And as long as he agreed to Chu Tianjiao's conditions, he could soar to the skies in the Chu Country. No one would dare to block his path ever again.

But was Chu Tianjiao a fool? If he agreed, he would no longer be Qin Wentian.

“Your Highness, I thank you for your kind intentions.” Qin Wentian calmly replied without adding anything else. Very obviously, he had silently rejected. But then again, this was only to be expected.

Since he could stand alone on the snowy pathways, obstructing the escort of Qin Chuan, Qin Wentian's actions already indicated what sort of person he was.

“Since I gave my agreement, I would naturally abide by it. Luo Qianqiu’s promise is my promise as well.” Chu Tianjiao didn’t add on too much since he had already given Qin Wentian a chance. As to whether Qin Wentian wanted to agree to it or not, the ball was in Qin Wentian’s court, not his.

No matter when, the words he spoke were always appropriate and fitting to the occasion. Whatever he had agreed to, he would definitely do it. Despite Luo Qianqiu making the decision for him, he was not angered by it. On the contrary, he said that the promise made by Luo Qianqiu was equivalent to a promise made by him.

The people of the Chu Country’s Royal Capital seemed to have a clearer understanding of the rumored 3rd Prince after this exchange.

Chu Tianjiao, the pride of heavens of the Chu Country. It was impossible for such a person not to ascend the throne.

The current emperor had great ambitions and grand aims; it was only at his later age before he had descendants. And thus, his oldest son, was merely 28 years of age, but among all the princes, the one he doted on most was the 3rd prince – Chu Tianjiao.

“Bring Qin Chuan back. From now onwards, no one is allowed to mistreat him” Chu Tianjiao calmly commanded. In response, the escorts turned and brought Qin Chuan away.

In the iron cage, Qin Chuan’s eyes pierced through the space and

landed on Qin Wentian's figure.

“I will always believe that you will prove to yourself and to the entire Chu Country that you are stronger than them.” Qin Chuan's eyes reddened as he silently added in his heart, “The Chu Country is unable to block your path. Your world belongs to a much vaster stage than this. Child, this is only a little stumbling block on the pathway of your future. Don't stumble because of me. Your future path is still long, extremely long.”

Qin Chuan's eyes glowed with a light akin to the constellations of the skies, as he looked at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian, was also looking at him, and it was as though he could read the intent behind that gaze. He silently added in his heart, “Father, your son will not disappoint you.”

After the escorts left, Bai Qingsong cast a long, deep look at Qin Wentian before shifting his gaze to Autumn Snow, as he stated, “Autumn Snow, let's leave.”

Like she had just awaken from her shock, Bai Autumn Snow nodded in agreement. Her current state of heart was extremely chaotic.

It wasn't because of hatred or regret, but rather because Qin Wentian, from the beginning to the end, didn't even look at her. Not even a single glance.

She could still clearly remember the words she spoke to him back then. “Both of us are already destined to be people belonging to different worlds”

Qin Wentian’s reply was, “But you are right. From the start, you and I were already destined to be people belonging to different worlds.”

Now, reality had already proven who was right and who was wrong.

Autumn Snow raised her head, as she looked upon the drifting snowflakes. A misty look could be seen in her beautiful eyes. For the first time in her life, she doubted herself.

Even after the regiment of troops left, the spectators around had yet to disperse.

They looked at the three young elites leading the regiment – Chu Tianjiao, Luo Qianqiu and Ye Wuque. How outstanding were they.

After today’s battle, they had a deeper understanding of Chu Tianjiao and Luo Qianqiu. Likewise, the two also somewhat ‘understood’ Qin Wentian. A lone youth facing off three of them amidst the storm of snow and wind.

Today, there was no victor or loser, but the faces of these elites were already deeply imprinted in the hearts of the spectators.

From now onwards, they would never forget Chu Tianjiao's calmness and confidence, Luo Qianqiu's pride and arrogance, and Ye Wuque's deep profoundness.

At the same time, they would never forget the tenacity and resoluteness of the youth that dared to stand against them. That stubbornness and determination, as well that extraordinary talent.

Today, spectators 'understood' the real Qin Wentian, Chu Tianjiao, and Luo Qianqiu through their words and actions.

His name was Qin Wentian. The young genius grandmaster 3rd level divine inscriptionist. Behind him was the Divine Weapon Pavilion. Behind him, was also the will of the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Clan, Qin Wentian!

Chu Tianjiao and the others departed, leaving behind footprints on the white snow.

Behind them was Yanaro. If there had to be a loser today, that loser would be Yanaro, without a doubt.

Qin Wentian's eyes were still fixated on the departing Qin Chuan, as the Yuanfu cultivators standing beside him patted his shoulders and reassured him, "Don't worry, since Chu Tianjiao promised you in front of so many people, he would not go back on his words."

Lightly nodding his head, Qin Wentian smiled as he regarded them. “Thank you, Elders, for the help today.”

“You are already considered a treasure of the Divine Weapon Pavilion. In the future, I may even be the one that needs your help.” One of the Yuanfu cultivators laughed. The two of them naturally belonged to the Divine Weapon Pavilion Faction.

They naturally dared to stand together with Qin Wentian. In this cultivation-oriented world, those with power would never have to fear for their survival. Both of them possessed a cultivation base at the Yuanfu Realm. Even if they stood with Qin Wentian against Chu Tianjiao, Chu Tianjiao would never be so foolish to send other Yuanfu cultivators against them. Doing so would be akin to going against the Divine Weapon Pavilion!

The Divine Weapon Pavilion held a special position within the Chu Country. Even the Royal Clan dared not offend them needlessly. If, in a moment of anger, the Divine Weapon Pavilion decided to bring all their resources and leave the Chu Country and join their enemies, the Chu Country would certainly face a disaster.

This was also the reason why Chu Tianjiao wanted to rope in Qin Wentian. A young genius who could inscribe 3rd level divine imprints would naturally enjoy the favor of many powerful existence in the future.

A high level weaponsmith could easily persuade many to aid him in his endeavours.

“Since the people from the Emperor Star Academy have arrived, we will take our leave first.” The Yuanfu cultivators from the Divine Weapon Pavilion lightly nodded their heads to Qin Wentian before they departed.

Qin Wentian turned around, and his gaze landed on the silhouette wearing the bamboo hat, standing in the snow, walking away as though that figure was merely a passerby.

“Senior Ren, many thanks.” A smile of gratitude displayed on Qin Wentian’s visage. A man had to clearly differentiate between gratitude and vengeance. For those who had helped him before, Qin Wentian would engrave their kindness within his heart.

Today, in the darkest period of his life, both the Divine Weapon Pavilion and the Emperor Star Academy had chosen to support him, thereby standing with him against the pressure of Imperial Authority. This debt of gratitude, he would forever remember it!

AGM 093 – Conversation With Mustang

It was easy to add decorations to something already perfect but tough to send coal to others in snowy weather.

Today, the reason why Qin Wentian could stand upright in the storm was all because of the Divine Weapon Pavilion and the Emperor Star Academy.

This debt of gratitude, he would never forget it.

Luo Huan strolled forwards and arrived by the side of Qin Wentian as she smiled, “Good fellow.”

Luo Huan understood that from today onwards, the number of people who wanted to deal with Qin Wentian would be even greater.

But even if they wanted to send assassins, they also had to consider carefully.

In the Royal Capital of Chu, all powers would naturally have their spy network. Every movement of every single blade of grass would also be monitored. Hence, there was no way for someone to hide forever.

Regardless of whoever it was, when facing against those from the great clans and powerful sects, there weren't a lot of people who would chose to use assassins. Once the spy network was activated,

their consequences might be even more horrific.

These people already missed their best opportunity to assassinate Qin Wentian.

Perhaps Qin Wentian previously didn't have the qualifications to warrant such a high level of threat to them, but the current Qin Wentian was different from before and had even achieve such a high level of recognition from others.

Naturally, the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan were included in the families that wanted to kill him.

Previously, the Ou Clan sent Orchon, hoping that he could deal with Qin Wentian with his strength alone. But Orchon failed and even ended up imprisoned. Now, if the Ou Clan wanted to deal with Qin Wentian again, they had to take extreme caution.

Qin Yao also walked over. As she held Qin Wentian's hair, her face was filled with traces of a smile.

"Wentian, thank you for everything." Qin Yao gazed at Qin Wentian with a gentle smile.

"Sister, what nonsense are you talking about?" Qin Wentian pinched the sides of Qin Yao's cheeks. "That's my father as well, so why are you thanking me?"

"I was wrong." Qin Yao gazed at her brother's face which had lost

all traces of his earlier immaturity, as her smile got even more radiant. Looking at Qin Wentian's accomplishment, she only felt a sense of gratification in her heart.

"It's good that you've apologised." Qin Wentian laughed as he continued, "Don't return to the Snowcloud Country anymore. Its Crown Prince isn't a good man."

"Mmm." Qin Yao nodded, "but how about Qin Shang and Qin Zhi, would they be okay?"

"I've heard that the Crown Prince of Snowcloud Country is also someone extraordinary, so I don't think he would be so petty. After all, we didn't do anything that offended him, I don't think he would do any harm to Qin Shang and Qin Zhi." Qin Wentian continued, "but to be on the safe side, write a letter to them and get them to keep low profile until they find a chance to sneak out of the Snowcloud Country."

In the Chu Country, there were certain organizations that specialised in courier delivery. As long as you could afford to pay the price, your letter would be delivered safely to the recipient using only a short amount of time.

"Okay, I will write the letter once I go back." Qin Yao replied.

After that, they departed, moving in the direction of the academy. Little Rascal appeared out of nowhere and jumped into Luo Huan's bosom.

Snow still drifted about, and the crowd slowly dispersed after Qin Wentian's withdrawal.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian's name was spread over the entire country. Just the fact that he was a 3rd level divine inscriptionist alone was already enough for his name to resound throughout, let alone the things that happened today. Today's events would surely become hot topics for discussion among the citizens of the Chu Country.

When Qin Wentian returned to the Emperor Star Academy, there were several people leisurely strolling about in the snow. The beautiful snowflakes drifting about seemed to add an additional layer of aesthetic to the Emperor Star Academy.

Looking at the following faces of his fellow students, a brilliant smile was displayed on Qin Wentian face. After a year of so being tempered by so many different experiences, he felt that he had matured a lot.

“Qin Wentian is back.”

From afar, several gazes were cast in the direction of Qin Wentian, as traces of a strange light could be seen flickering in their eyes.

As Qin Wentian strode forwards, following the snowy paths, there were two young girls who passed him by and sneakily cast him a glance, before whispering, “Xing`er, this person is none other than Qin Wentian. In his first year, he defeated Murong

Feng, and he can even withstand three attacks from Luo Qianqiu.”

“What a handsome young fellow. He’s currently ranked the first among the new batch of students.”

“Yup, and from the looks of it, he is much stronger than the previous number one, Murong Feng. Qin Wentian should be able to catch up and even take Senior Luo.”

The volume of their voices got smaller and smaller, as their voices gradually faded away. This actually caused an expression of astonishment to appear on Qin Wentian’s face. Exactly how fast did the news spread? It seems as though even before he returned, the entire academy already knew of what had transpired.

“It appears that you’ve become famous.” Luo Huan laughed, causing Qin Wentian to shrug his shoulders. The commotion caused this time around was not small indeed.

Within his heart, Qin Wentian felt a sense of gratification. After all, he was only 17 years of age. With regards to the admiration of him by his peers, he would naturally feel some joy from it.

But of course, even if that was the case, he was also very clear that the most important reason why he could achieve such an ending, other than having an above average talent, was the support given to him by the Divine Weapon Pavilion and the Emperor Star Academy. He himself, based on his own abilities, didn’t have anything that would cause people to hold him in awe.

If there was a day when he could depend on his own abilities alone to dazzle the crowd, causing people to hold him in awe, by then, the dazzling glow he emitted would even be brighter than the glow emitted from the constellations.

The world was so vast, and his life had merely just began. This was just the Chu Country, and yet, there was already so many talents. Then, what about the world outside? How fascinating would it be?

“It’s merely receiving three attacks. Senior Luo didn’t really have a real match with him. Qin Wentian now still doesn’t have any qualifications to even be mentioned in the same breath as Senior Luo.”

At this moment, a sarcastic sounding voice drifted over. Qin Wentian cast his gaze in that direction, only to see that there were a guy and a girl standing there.

The guy’s countenance was somewhat unsightly, and the girl displayed a panicky look on her face after discovering Qin Wentian. She added frantically, “What nonsense are you sprouting? After all, Qin Wentian only joined the academy for a year. How could you compared the two of them? This isn’t fair at all.”

“Maybe you have overestimated him.” That guy glared towards Qin Wentian as he spoke, causing the countenance of the girl to stiffen.

Qin Wentian turned his head, showing no more interest in their conversation. Hugging Little Rascal in his embrace, he continued walking on the pathway.

“That girl earlier seemed to like you a lot, making the guy jealous.” Luo Huan spoke.

Qin Wentian merely smiled and shook his head. He wouldn't be bothered about small matters like these. After all, the perception of others wasn't something that you could change.

After receiving the news that Qin Wentian had returned, many people silently speculated. Would the conflict between Qin Wentian and the Knight's Association further escalate up another level?

Qin Wentian entered his dorm, only to see Fan Le lazily squinting his eyes, looking at him as he rushed forwards and embraced Qin Wentian in a hug. “Boss, I'm so happy to see you!”

“Damn Fatty, glad that you know it.” Qin Wentian pounded Fan Le on his shoulder after the two of them separated. Fan Le continued holding onto Qin Wentian's hand as he stated, “Boss, I've always been worried about your safety, and even lost a few pounds of weight over it. Now that you're fine, I feel so much more revitalised. Oh yeah, boss, I heard that you can inscribe 3rd level imprints now. When are you planning to give some presents to me?”

Qin Wentian glanced at Fatty's swollen figure and rolled his eyes.

“I’m so ‘touched’ by your concern.”

“It’s fine, there’s no need to be feel this way. Just give me some 3rd level Divine Weapons to thank me.” Both of fatty’s eyes glowed with light.

“Nope.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Boss, I also heard that you now even have an interspatial ring and can easily take out a Divine Spear as well as an ancient halberd. Forget what I said about the 3rd level Divine Weapons, top-grade 2nd level Divine Weapons would acceptable too! And now that I think about it, having a few Yuan Meteor Stones to aid me in my cultivation wouldn’t be bad either.” Fatty continued with unflagging efforts, refusing to give up.

“Still nope.” Qin Wentian curtly replied.

“My good brother, what happened to brotherhood and sharing of good fortune together?” Fatty’s eyes was filled with mock tears, causing goosebumps to appear on Qin Wentian’s entire body.

“Fan Le, don’t worry about Divine Weapons. You will have more than you could possibly use in the future.” Luo Huan rolled her eyes as she shifted her gaze to Qin Wentian. “Junior brother, Teacher wanted a meeting with you. Why don’t you tag along with me?”

“Right. I have something that I need to talk to Teacher about as

well.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“Fan Le, come along with us.” Luo Huan smiled. Fan Le agreed, and the three of them left the area.

Not far away, the gazes of many of new students were directed at their direction, but they sighed in their hearts. All of them were new students, but the distance between them and Qin Wentian was already so far apart.

Mustang sat crossed-legged by the side of a flowing pond, closing his eyes in meditation.

The teachers of the Emperor Star Academy was also under plenty of pressure, so they had to constantly push themselves, not forgetting to cultivate and to trying to break through to deeper and more profound realms.

When the three of them appeared, Mustang’s eyes snapped open and flickered with a sense of pride as he studied Qin Wentian.

“Teacher.” Qin Wentian and Fan Le bowed slightly, indicating their respect.

“Speaking of this leaves me with regret. As your teacher, I didn’t even have the time to guide you, and yet you already reached such a high level of accomplishment by yourself today.” Mustang smiled as he spoke. Although it was as he said, he was happy for Qin Wentian. With Qin Wentian’s performance and being Qin

Wentian's teacher, it would be a lie if one were to say that he didn't feel proud.

"Your student will never forget the help that Teacher Mustang rendered to my Qin Clan earlier." Qin Wentian replied with gratitude.

"I know you are someone that values relationships. That's why even the reclusive old man Ren would be willing to make an appearance to save you. Your current position in the Emperor Star Academy is no longer lower than my position as an Elder." Mustang spoke with a smile, "Take a seat first."

After Qin Wentian and the rest were seated, Mustang continued, "Now that you made some accomplishments, breaking into Yuanfu is merely a matter of time for you. Let me impart you with some of my wisdom and experiences to expand your scope of knowledge, which would only be beneficial for you. After all, as someone that obtained the recognition of our academy, you will inevitably leave the Chu Country. There's no way that this piece of land could ever contain someone with your potential."

AGM 094 – Luo Qianqiu's Background

Qin Wentian stood up and listened seriously. Even Fan Le, who was beside him, was paying more attention than usual. In a cultivation-oriented society, the world was not as simple as what he had imagined. What they encountered before was merely the tip of the iceberg.

At this moment, Mustang undoubtedly wanted to widen their horizons and perspectives.

As Mustang waved his hands, instantly on the ground, appeared a gigantic circle. He then moved a piece of small stone and placed it inside the circle.

“This stone is the Chu Country.” Mustang spoke, causing the pupils of Qin Wentian and Fan Le to narrow. If that small stone was the Chu Country, then what was that gigantic circle?

“This is the Snowcloud Country, Yan Country, Ice Country.....” They saw Mustang placing several small stones within the circle, but even after that, the space the stones took up was still extremely small.

After this, Mustang drew small circles around the stones that represented the various countries and linked them together, taking up a space that couldn't be considered small. However, that space, when compared to the circumference of the gigantic circle, was still considerably small.

At this moment, Mustang placed a slightly bigger stone within the circle.

”Including Chu, there are over ten countries, but the power behind them is this piece of bigger stone—the Nine Mystical Palace.

Mustang calmly spoke, but the knowledge he revealed caused the hearts of Qin Wentian and Fan Le to shudder. The Nine Mystical Palace should be nothing but a sect, but to think that they actually have control over more than ten countries...

“Just a single word from the Nine Mystical Palace can cause the Chu Country to become the master of the others, but likewise, just a single word from them can also destroy the Chu Country. But despite its influence, as a transcendent power, the Nine Mystical Palace would not interfere too much in the inner workings of each country. And occasionally, they would even scout talented youngsters from each of the countries and lure them over to become disciples of the Nine Mystical Palace.”

Mustang continued, “Luo Qianqiu originated from there.”

Qin Wentian tightly clenched both his fist from an immense sense of pressure that he felt. So this was the case. No wonder Luo Qianqiu’s position in the Chu Country was so supreme. It was because he came from the Nine Mystical Palace.

Not only that, he vaguely sensed that the Emperor Star Academy, seemed to somewhat dislike Luo Qianqiu.

Qin Wentian also understood now why Mustang came to him earlier and persuaded him to make peace with Luo Qianqiu regarding the Blood Ember Fruits

“Luo Qianqiu’s father was once a student of the Emperor Star Academy. His talent was astounding and gained him the academy’s recognition. Old man Ren even accepted him as his personal disciple and painstakingly nurtured him.”

Mustang didn’t stop. “In the end, his father went to the Nine Mystical Palace. The Emperor Star Academy, of course, does not obstruct students who chose to climb on a high stage. On the contrary, they would feel gratified. Luo Qianqiu’s father, however, was deeply envious of the Heavenly Star Pavilion’s items. He did not pass the requirement test through his own abilities and even stole a certain item, bringing it over to the Nine Mystical Palace. This incident almost created a catastrophe for the Emperor Star Academy.”

Qin Wentian and Fan Le was startled. There was actually such a complicated history hidden behind the facts that they thought they knew.

“Since Luo Qianqiu’s father had the support of the Nine Mystical Palace, why was it that nothing happened to our Emperor Star Academy in the end?” Fan Le asked seriously.

“The Emperor Star Academy had nurture countless talented students, and not all of them were people like Luo Qianqiu’s

father. Some of them even established their names and had extraordinary results elsewhere in the circle.” Mustang pointed to the space outside of the boundaries of the Nine Mystical Palace and the ten-plus countries under their control. He continued, “There’s one man that, after knowing the news, directly went to pressure the Nine Mystical Palace. This person was an existence that even the Nine Mystical Palace had reason to fear. And thus in the end, the matter was resolved without bloodshed.”

Upon hearing this, Qin Wentian felt gratitude in his heart. In the several thousand years of the academy’s history, there were some that graduated but did not forget about the place that groomed their talents in the first place.

“Around the area controlled by the Nine Mystical Palace, there are several other countries backed by existences with a similar scope as the Nine Mystical Palace. Examples of these would be Misty Peak and Sunset Mountains. Each of these great powers governs an area consisting of more than ten countries.” Mustang drew several circles similar to the size of the Nine Mystical Palace in the gigantic circles, and swiftly after, a chunk of the area was taken up by them.

Such a simple way of explanation allowed Qin Wentian Fan Le to clearly understand that the Chu Country, in the face of all these powers, was just a little stone.

And yet, they were still struggling on their path within the small stone that was Chu Country.

“Since the Nine Mystical Palace does not interfere with the

administration of Chu Country, why is it that they can still stand at the back, easily control over ten countries, and with a single word, destroy or proclaim a country as emperor?" Mustang questioned as he regarded Qin Wentian and Fan Le.

"Naturally, it is because of strength." Qin Wentian replied.

"That's right. If a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign appears within the Chu Country, how could laws of the country ever restrict him? Not only that, within the Nine Mystical Palace, there were a few cultivators at the Sovereign level. And currently, we received news that Luo Qianqiu's father was attempting his breakthrough, but it is still unknown whether he succeeded or failed."

The words Mustang uttered allowed Qin Wentian to understand what kind of position Luo Qianqiu held within the Emperor Star Academy. Without a doubt, the top brass of the academy had not wanted to allow Luo Qianqiu inside, but because of Luo Qianqiu's background, they had no choice but to acquiesce.

"I still have a question." Qin Wentian respectfully spoke.

"Go ahead." Mustang nodded his head.

"Considering Chu Tianjiao's talent, his future shouldn't be stuck within the Chu Country, no?" Qin Wentian asked with obvious intent. With his talent, Chu Tianjiao would definitely be one of those who were favored by the Nine Mystical Palace. Since that was the case, why was he still interested in contending for the throne?

No matter the throne of which country, they would still need a strong power to pave their way for them. Strength was the most important.

Mustang naturally understood Qin Wentian's intention when he asked that question. With a smile, he answered. "Wentian, cultivation requires a colossal amount of resources. If Chu Tianjiao became the Emperor of the country, who do you think the Chu Country's resources would flow to?"

Qin Wentian had a 'slow' expression on his face before light finally dawned in his eyes. Mustang continued, "An Emperor need not restrict themselves by staying in the country. They could find a few groups of people, for example the Ye Clan, to govern the country on their behalf and thus their cultivation would not be neglected.

"Okay enough of this. Next, I need to tell you about the main points of our meeting today.: Mustang gazed at Qin Wentian with hints of admiration in his eyes. "I thought that I would only be breaching this topic to you next year, but I never expected you to mature so quickly. Because of this, i decided to tell this to you ahead of time."

Qin Wentian was somewhat curious. What was exactly did Mustang want to talk with him about?

"Within the Chu Country, there's a grand banquet at the end of every year. The name of this banquet is the Jun Lin Banquet.

Firstly, Jun (Emperor of a country) signifies that the Emperor of Chu would attend this banquet. Secondly, Lin(Lead) means that the victor of the competition held at the grand banquet will have the potential to lead the world in the future.”

After hearing this, Qin Wentian felt his heart quiver slightly in anticipation. This must be the banquet that Luo Qianqiu had mentioned.

The name of the banquet was the Jun Lin Banquet. Jun Lin, Emperor of the entire world.

“This, obviously, is not a simple banquet. The Jun Lin Banquet is held at the place where the Chu Dynasty first established itself, inviting the young elites of all countries within a hall. There, the young heroes below the Yuanfu Realm spar against each other and exchange pointers. For those who performe outstandingly, their names would shake the Chu dynasty and enable the Chu Country to bask in glory.”

“Those within the top nine will receive favor from their respective countries. Thus, elites of the other countries are also placing this event in such high regards. Not only that, I can clearly tell you that this grand banquet is also a stage for the Nine Mystical Palace to choose their disciples.”

“In addition, for those within the top nine rankings, not only would they would receive tremendous rewards from the Chu Country, their respective academies would also reward their students as well. However, the criteria for obtaining our Emperor Star Academy’s reward is that the student must achieve the top

ranking! Do you know what the Emperor Star Academy's reward is? The Emperor Star Academy will allow that particular student entry to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion."

"7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?" Qin Wentian froze. Ever since the start, he had always been curious about the higher levels of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Everyone in the Emperor Star Academy knew that in the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, there were peak Yuanfu Realm cultivation arts as well as top-tier, earth-grade innate techniques. But what exactly did the 7th, 8th, and 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion contain?

"That's right, the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. The banquet is the fastest way to gain entry. Other than through obtaining a high ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet, the other methods to grant you access to the 7th level are all too astronomical or exhaust too much time. Luo Qianqiu has no way to obtain entry using the other methods, and thus, the Jun Lin Banquet is his only chance. He must place first among all the elites. At that time, like his father, he would then be able to enter the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion."

"The 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion is also the threshold to enter the 8th and 9th level. As to what exactly is inside it, even I do not know of this. I now knew that Luo Qianqiu's father once obtained the first ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet and was selected by the Nine Mystical Palace. After entering the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he did not pass the test for entering the 8th level with his own abilities but instead depended on something the

Nine Mystical Palace granted him to force his way into the 8th level. How could the Emperor Star Academy tolerate such a blatant, traitorous attempt?”

Mustang’s words allowed Qin Wentian to clearly understand the history behind Luo Qianqiu’s father and the academy.

“Luo Qianqiu’s appearance in the Emperor Star Academy was the contest between Luo Qianqiu’s father and the academy. The academy doesn’t want Luo Qianqiu to be ranked first in the grand banquet, but now that Luo Qianqiu has already broken through to the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, with his talent, he does indeed have a chance of obtaining the first rank. And even if he failed, there’s next year’s Jun Lin Banquet; by that time, he would have broken through to the peak of Arterial Circulation. Who can stop him then?”

Mustang looked at Qin Wentian, and he added in a serious tone, “Now that you’ve gained the recognition of the Emperor Star Academy, the top brass of the academy naturally hope that you will be able to snatch the top ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet next year, spoiling Luo Qianqiu’s plans.”

“Next year? what happens if Luo Qianqiu obtained the top ranking this year?” Qin Wentian asked, “Don’t tell me the academy is really going to allow him entry to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.”

“If that’s the case, it means that the Emperor Star Academy has truly lost. Since we lost the contest, so be it.” Mustang inclined his head as he gaze upon the falling snow flakes before continuing,

“Every year at the grand banquet, there are many monstrous talents attending from all over the world. Within them, there are quite a few already at the peak of Arterial Circulation. We can only hope.. That one of them will be able to defeat Luo Qianqiu.”

He didn't even dare imagine that Qin Wentian would be able to suppress Luo Qianqiu this year. After all, the grand banquet was only two months away. This time around, although Qin Wentian could attend the grand banquet, it would be best if he saw it as just a way to temper himself and increase his strength!

AGM 095 – Attempting Creation

Qin Wentian's current cultivation base was at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation. One year from now, with his talent, he should be able to step into the peak of Arterial Circulation. This year-long period was sufficient for Qin Wentian to consolidate and ensure that his cultivation base was stable, as well as gain more insights on how to strengthen his Astral Souls to use them to aid in his battles. Only then would he have a chance to get the first ranking in the grand banquet.

“Are we really going to place our hopes on others?” Qin Wentian mumbled. He had personally experienced the strength Luo Qianqiu was capable of wielding. Even when Luo Qianqiu was holding back, his level of strength was already extremely terrifying. If Qin Wentian had not seized the initiative during the third attack, the ending would surely have been different. Not only that, since Luo Qianqiu's aim was clear, it was certain that during these remaining months, he would definitely find a way to heighten his power.

Luo Qianqiu originated from the Nine Mystical Palace, so Qin Wentian naturally would not underestimate him. Most definitely, Luo Qianqiu also had cards hidden up his sleeves.

“Even if my chance of becoming the champion this year is not that great, I must still attempt it.” Qin Wentian spoke.

“I think so as well. However, the competition at the grand banquet have a certain degree of danger to it. Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, and some others will surely take part in it. Just treat it as part of your training and retreat if you can't handle it. Remember,

caution above all,” Mustang reminded him.

After all, the Emperor Star Academy currently had extremely high expectations of Qin Wentian.

Mustang also understood what does these expectations meant. The 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion also represented the stairway to the 8th and the 9th level.

Ever since the Emperor Star Academy was founded all those years ago, there had never been anyone who entered the 9th level before.

The Emperor Star Academy’s top brass had always hoped that there would be a day when a student of good character and extraordinary talent would appear. Only then would that student have a chance to create history.

“Teacher, with my status right now, is it possible for me to visit the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?” A somewhat silly smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s countenance, causing Mustang to roll his eyes at him. “Using a backdoor? Now that you can inscribe 3rd level imprints, Yuan Meteor Stones shouldn’t be a problem for you. Shouldn’t you make some contributions to the academy as well?”

Qin Wentian’s countenance turned crestfallen after hearing this. Mustang continued, “How about this? Upgrade your medallion to the 4th level on your own, and for the 5th level, \ tell the elder in charge there that I was the one who granted you access. As for the 6th level, think of a way yourself.”

“Thank you Teacher.” Qin Wentian smiled. The 5th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion? This way, he would have the chance to study some mid-tier earth-grade innate techniques.

“Teacher, me, what about me!!” Fatty interjected. He fervently pointed to himself while winking.

“You stay here and work hard in cultivating.” Mustang glared at Fan Le as he continued. “If you work harder, your cultivation may not even lose out to Qin Wentian.”

Fatty could only smile bitterly as he nodded his head. During the period of time when Qin Wentian had disappeared, Mustang had personally coached Fatty in his cultivation. Not only that, he treated Fatty extremely well, which caused Fatty to feel very touched.

Luo Huan also laughed. Fatty’s talent was also pretty good, it was just that he was too lazy. But despite of this, his cultivation base was already at the 5th level of Arterial Circulation and could also be considered one of the top few among the new students.

“Fatty, I will help you to increase the level of your medallion to the 4th level.” Qin Wentian remarked. Fan Le excitedly replied, “That’s my brother alright!”

“Teacher, we will take our leave first.” Qin Wentian and Fan Le both bid farewell and left with Luo Huan.

Mustang lowered his head to gaze at the gigantic circle he drew. Both Qin Wentian and Fan Le did not ask him what that gigantic circle was because they didn't want to be overly ambitious. To them, even the Nine Mystical Palace was an elusive target. The power represented by the gigantic circle wasn't something that they could imagine.

After Qin Wentian and the rest left, a silhouette suddenly appeared behind Mustang.

Mustang stood up and he smiled to the silhouette. "Old man Ren, why don't you let that little fellow to raise the level of his jade medallion himself?"

Obviously, the act of using Mustang's name was false. In truth, the Emperor Star Academy had already opened up a backdoor for Qin Wentian.

"He has already mastered the 3rd imprint of the Thousand-Hands Imprint, a mid-tier, earth-grade innate technique. The 5th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion is quite suitable to him. I only hope that he can quickly mature. It would be best if the upcoming grand banquet would put an immense pressure on him, since being under pressure is one of the fastest way to grow." Ren Qianxing continued his profound words, "I hope that my judgement this time around is able to compensate for the erroneous judgement I made back in the past."

Mustang looked at Ren Qianxing and sighed in his heart. It

appeared that old man Ren was still blamed himself and was still wounded by the fact that he was the one that had nurture the talent of Luo Qianqiu's father.

.....

After Qin Wentian upgraded his medallion to the 5th level, he entered the Heavenly Star Pavilion once again. In the end, he chose two more mid-tier, earth-grade innate techniques. Since he had already mastered the 3rd imprint of the Thousand-Hand Imprint, this indicated that he could comprehend innate techniques of this level.

Innate Technique – Falling Mountain Palms. An innate technique that grew stronger as the user's cultivation base improved. After cultivating this to the peak, each and every palm strike would possess an extremely terrifying might akin to that of a mountain.

Qin Wentian chose the Falling Mountain Palms because, coincidentally, he had a Divine Imprint that could complement this innate technique. This Divine Imprint was a mountain-type Divine Imprint and was at the 2nd level. Previously, Qin Wentian had tried using this particular mountain-type Divine Imprint to condense and compact Divine Energy, but the speed of condensing was extremely slow, and not only that, it also expended an astronomical amount of Astral Energy. But despite of this, it was successful, and in the battle against Luo Qianqiu, although his body only contained a sliver of Divine Energy compacted by the mountain-type imprint, its might was already exceedingly powerful.

And now, the speed of him compacting his Divine Energy using palm-type imprints had gotten increasingly faster. It was only a matter of time before he stepped into the 2nd level of the Spirit Refinement Method. By then, his speed of compacting Divine Energy using mountain-type imprints would raise exponentially. As for now, he could just store some of the Divine Energy compacted from using mountain-type imprints in his body to be used as one of his hidden cards.

The second innate technique Qin Wentian had chosen was named the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique. This technique consisted of four stances and 36 transformation – Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermillion Bird, Black Tortoise (Xuanwu). Each stance contained nine transformations, and they allowed the user to move like the fleeting clouds, attacking and defending at the same instant. This technique was extremely suitable for combat.

The Heavenly Star Pavilion contained a myriad of innate techniques. There were sword techniques, sabre techniques, spear techniques, and thus, there was even halberd-type innate techniques. Since the Heavenly Hammer Soul emphasized tyrannical force, it matched the tyrannical aura of the halberd quite well. After coming across this technique, Qin Wentian didn't hesitate and decided to choose it.

For simple attacking techniques, he had the Thousand-Hands Imprint as well as the Falling Mountain Palms; for attack and defense, he had the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique; for movement techniques, he had the Garuda Movement Technique. If he could completely master his innate techniques, his overall martial prowess would heighten immensely.

Three days later, in one of the unique courtyards of the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian was sitting down beside a pond with his eyes closed, ignoring all external matters.

Once one's jade medallion level reached the 4th level, one could select a unique courtyard for their own residence.

Qin Wentian was not only sleeping. In his dreamscape, there was an ocean with waves that was frenziedly gushing upon the shore, where a figure moved while wielding an ancient halberd. Every time he moved, it was as though a ferocious tiger was howling in anger. As he stabbed explosively forward, with each strike, the thunderous sound that echoed out was akin to a cacophony of angry roars from a group of crazed tigers.

As a huge wave came crashing over, the figure that wielded the halberd changed his stance, not allowing the slightest bit of wind nor water to pass through. In front of him, there was a manifestation of gigantic Xuanwu Black Tortoise that devoured the ocean waves to nothingness.

At this moment, he stepped forth, and his whole body transformed into a Garuda and soared upwards, roaring in anger. The ancient halberd in his hands changed its stance to the Azure Dragon, as manifestations of numerous azure dragons could be seen exploding forwards, crashing into the ocean.

After several moments, this figure landed on the ground and sat down on the shore.

This person was none other than Qin Wentian!

Since this was just a dream, why not magnify the scope and indulge himself in fantasy? He could imagine himself many times stronger than in reality in his dreamscape and could unleash the full power of the innate techniques. This way, his comprehension towards the innate techniques would be much stronger.

Qin Wentian raised his head, staring at the night skies. However, the skies he was staring at was not the skies of Heavens and Earth but rather that of the Landscape Pictograph.

In that landscape, every brushstroke created mountains and rivers, and contained within them were multitudes of peerless innate techniques.

Qin Wentian gradually immersed himself in comprehending the insights, entering into a state of deep meditation.

Every single outline of the brushstrokes in the landscape seemed to interweave together forming runic lines similar to Divine Imprints. These Divine Imprints could also be used to 'create' Divine Energy.

When he cultivate his innate techniques, he discovered that the way his innate techniques unleashed his power was extremely similar to Divine Imprints that were inscribed on Divine Weapons. For example, the Falling Mountain Palms, when used to attack, the user would be able to control Astral Energy and form a manifestation of a mountain peak that smashed down on his

enemies. This was similar to that time when he created a manifestation of a mountain using the sliver of mountain-type Divine Energy in his fight with Luo Qianqiu. The only difference was that the Falling Mountain Palms was more complex, yet the effects it created was similar.

Qin Wentian had a bold hypothesis. Innate techniques, did they evolved from Divine Imprints?

Looking at the Landscape Pictograph in the skies of his dreamscape, Qin Wentian sank even deeper in his meditation.

If there were others who realised this unusual occurrence, they wouldn't even think about it. Even if they thought about it, they would not ponder over it too deeply. After all, not every Stellar Martial Cultivator was the same as Qin Wentian, who possessed the Spirit Refinement Method, the Landscape Pictograph, and a forging-type Astral Soul that granted him extraordinary insights in weapons forging.

Three days later, although Qin Wentian had not achieve an answer, he was not sad about it. On the contrary, he was extremely joyful, because, with regards to innate techniques, his understanding was now on a deeper and more profound level. Rather, it could be said that Qin Wentian used his own lines of reasoning to understand them and even formulated his own thought processes.

Qin Wentian started to draw runic lines on the ground in his dreamscape. Within every single one of his strokes, there seemed to be a mysterious surge of energy contained within. This time,

Qin Wentian didn't inscribe the Divine Imprints within his body, but instead, he used his hands to inscribe the outlines directly from his imagination.

The essence of Divine Imprints were as such. For Divine Imprints the previous generations left behind, every line and every curve had to be perfect before the Divine Imprint could be used. As long as any part of the inscription was slightly deformed or drawn imperfectly, the Divine Imprints would lose its effect. And thus, if Qin Wentian wanted to depend on his own strength and understanding to create a complete Divine Imprint, it would become a tremendously difficult task. But nevertheless, he still wanted to give it a try.

After all, wasn't the Landscape Pictograph that was painted over the skies in his dreamscape also a form of creation powered by the imaginations and comprehensions of that green-robed middle-aged senior?

AGM 096 – The First Painting

The Qin Wentian inside the dreamscape had already fully immersed himself in a special state. He didn't know how much time had passed, nor did he know what he was doing.

Even when Qin Yao came to wake him up outside his dreamscape, he remained motionless in this state. Thus, Qin Yao did not continue interrupting his dream.

If experts in the dream arts were here, they would know that Qin Wentian's special state was in fact his consciousness entering into an extremely deep dream state. In this kind of special state, his comprehension ability would heighten immensely to its strongest state.

Two days later, Qin Wentian was still making adjustments on the shore inside the dreamscape for an unknown number of times. Finally, Qin Wentian halted his finger and gazed upon the picture he had completed inscribing, awakening from that state.

“Success.” Surprise and joy flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes. The picture that he inscribed, resembled the shape of a human wielding an ancient halberd that was simply piercing forwards. But even within such a simple movement, it gave off a sense of boundless energy. That aura was relentlessly pressing forward, destroying everything in front of it.

This picture seemed to move on its own. As long as one looked at it, they would discover that this picture was somewhat ‘alive’ and

was able to bring the user into a miraculous realm..

“Is this a brand new type of Divine Imprint?” Qin Wentian murmured in a low voice. A Human-type Divine Imprint...If this really was the case, what grade would it belong to?

Qin Wentian raised his head and stared at the empty air. He was unsure how much time has passed, and with a slight intention of his will, he exited the dreamscape.

Back in reality, Qin Wentian opened his eyes, only to see Qin Yao was patrolling back and forth. He involuntarily called out, “Sister.”

Seeing Qin Wentian awake, Qin Yao smiled and walked over. “You’ve cultivate for such a long time.”

“Did you wait for long?” Qin Wentian asked.

“I visit here once in awhile. Wentian, I need to tell you something. I received the reply from Snowcloud Country.” Qin Yao’s countenance grew serious as she continued. “In the letter, they stated that at end of the year, a party accompanied by Snowcloud Country’s Crown Prince will head to the Chu Country.”

“What, why would they do that?” Qin Wentian’s brows furrowed.

“I have no idea.” Qin Yao shook her head, “but I heard another

important piece of news. “For the Jun Lin Banquet this year, the Crown Prince of Snowcloud Country will bring his people over as well.”

“Seems like this year’s Jun Lin Banquet will be very lively.” Qin Wentian murmured, but he smiled to Qin Yao. “Sister, don’t worry too much about it. We will know for better or for worse when the end of the year arrives.”

“Right, don’t let this matter put too much pressure on you as well. Just continue to work hard in your cultivation. Sister is useless, I can only place my hope on to you.” Qin Yao sadly replied with traces of apology in her voice. She knew that with her strength alone, it was forever impossible for her to rescue her father and grandpa.

This responsibility could only be shouldered by Qin Wentian.

“Leave it to me. There will be a day when I will soar through the skies, looking down from a height at the Chu Country like the bug it is.” Qin Wentian gently cradled Qin Yao’s face and smiled, trying to console Qin Yao.

“Okay.” Qin Yao finally smiled as she nodded. “Let me go cook something good for you to eat.”

“Very well. Finally, I’m able to taste Sister’s cooking.” Qin Wentian laughed as Qin Yao walked into the residence. Qin Wentian had chosen a solitary courtyard for his lodging, and thus, he had also invited Qin Yao to stay with him..

After Qin Yao left to head inside, Qin Wentian took a few pieces of paper, and using Astral Energy, he inscribed that picture onto the pieces of paper. However, whenever Qin Wentian tried to inscribe the picture from his dream in the real world, he kept failing. Evidently, he only succeeded in his dreamscape because of self-hypnosis that enabled him to reach a state of heightened comprehension.

Despite of his failures, as Qin Wentian gradually calmed his heart down, and after countless revisions, he finally completed inscribing the picture just when Qin Yao finished preparing the meal. After all, he had already succeeded before in his dream. He just needed to get himself used to the process in real life.

“What a marvellous piece of art this is. It almost seems alive.” Qin Yao stood by Qin Wentian’s side, her eyes flickeing with a brilliant light. “Wentian, why do I feel that this painting seemed to emanate a surge of tyrannical aura? Not only that, the figure seems to be half asleep and half awake. It even emits an overwhelming intent that wants to destroy Heavens and Earth with that halberd of his.”

Qin Yao got increasingly mystified the more she looked at it. As she focused on it, she felt as if that she was standing on the shore of an illusory ocean, facing against the figure in that painting. She felt that her life would be extinguished at any moment.

“This is my first painting of a runic portrait, I’m not too sure if it can be classified as a Divine Imprint.” Qin Wentian smiled as he continued, “Divine Imprints are all incredibly mysterious. Even

the most ordinary of inscriptions are vivid and lifelike, as though they contain a vital force within. While in a strange state of perception, I managed to inscribe this runic portrait. If it really does have an effect similar to Divine Imprints, its grade shouldn't be too low."

"You really are a monster." Qin Yao didn't know how she should describe Qin Wentian. Even to her untrained eyes, she could sense that the painting in front of her was exceedingly mysterious. To think that Qin Wentian could actually create such a thing through his own perception. This level of perception, she had no hope of attaining it.

Naturally, she was happy for Qin Wentian. This was her brother, the one closest to her.

"Right, let's go eat lunch" Qin Yao pulled Qin Wentian along towards the food that was set up. Qin Wentian's eyes lit up as he saw all the delicious food.

After enjoying a heartwarming lunch, Qin Wentian once again entered the Dreamsky Forest. Although life in the academy was peaceful now, he had not forgotten to increase his martial prowess.

In the City of Illusions, Qin Wentian appeared in an empty area. He rubbed the interspatial ring on his finger, and with a slight intent of his will, an ancient halberd appeared in his hands moments later.

"Indeed, this dreamscape truly feels like reality. Even the things I

brought in with me can be used in the dreamscape as well.”

Qin Wentian’s body flickered as he transformed into a phantom, moving with incredible speed.

Once the surrounding cultivators noticed Qin Wentian, they quickly dodged aside. Qin Wentian’s current reputation was already known to all. He could easily defeat Yanaro and even matched palms against Luo Qianqiu. If their cultivation bases weren’t the 8th level of Arterial Circulation or above, no one dared to antagonise him, especially after he was equipped with the ancient halberd. His aura got exponentially tyrannical when paired with that weapon.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian spotted a member from the Knight’s Association. This person was wielding a long spear and had a sharp gaze.

“Buzz.” A violent wind swept past as Qin Wentian’s silhouette, akin to a gigantic bird of prey, swooped down with lightning-fast speed. That person understood that it was impossible for him to retreat, and hence, he stabbed his spear forwards, dashing over to clash with Qin Wentian.

“Stance of the White Tiger.” The Berserker Beast Halberd Technique was executed. Numerous tiger roars issued forth as the halberd pierced out and clashed against the opponent’s long spear. An instant later, that long spear was flung out of the knight’s hand from the impact.

“Puchi!” The sharp edge of the halberd’s side, like a crescent blade, slashed into the body of his opponent. The pain of this injury was like cruel torture. The knight’s eyes stared daggers at Qin Wentian, before his body slowly disappeared from the dreamscape.

After Qin Wentian killed his opponent, he immediately started hunting the next. A few minutes later, he met a second member of the Knight’s Association and burst forth in motion within seconds, showing no mercy as he rushed with the force of a raging wind. A cold light radiated on the halberd’s sharp, crescent-shaped edge, slashing a line through the throat of his target. A shower of blood erupted.

Hunts after hunts, as long as he met a member of the Knight’s Association, Qin Wentian would ensure that the knight would die horribly under his halberd. He had transformed into the nightmare of the Knight’s Association’s members.

In the City of Illusions, many people personally witnessed Qin Wentian hunting the members of the Knight’s Association. The news was spread quickly through the Emperor Star Academy, which caused many people to sigh silently in their hearts. Qin Wentian obviously had not forgotten Fan Le’s torture and humiliation. The conflict between Qin Wentian and the Knight’s Association would only grow more and more intense.

However, Orchon was rumored to have gone out to temper himself after breaking through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation.

Everyone was very clear. Orchon was preparing himself for the Jun Lin Banquet scheduled at the end of the year. Once he was back, he would never let Qin Wentian off.

However, Qin Wentian also met a hard to deal with opponent in the City of Illusions. This person was clad in blue and had a cultivation base at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, with extremely terrifying combat abilities.

Naturally, Qin Wentian was joyful. Executing his Berserker Beast Halberd Technique, he strived to gain even more insights through the battle.

The four stances, 36 transformations of the halberd technique was a complete set of halberd techniques. One could only familiarise oneself with it through relentless, assiduous practice., and only then would the released power be stronger and stronger. In Qin Wentian's dreamscape, he visualized himself as a master of that technique, and when executing it in the dreamscape, he manifested a real Azure Dragon, a White Tiger, a Vermillion Bird, and a Xuanwu Black Tortoise.

“Chi.....” At this moment, Qin Wentian sensed that his opponent's palm strike transformed into an illusory attack. Instantly, the ancient halberd in his hands danced about, transforming into a manifestation of a Xuanwu Black Tortoise that defended his body. However, when his opponent's illusory palm strikes landed on the Xuanwu, the Xuanwu trembled nine times consecutively before it crumbled away. Qin Wentian's body drifted backwards as he retreated and laughed, “Let's duel again another day.”

After that, he turned and left. He eventually arrived alone in an empty space and began practicing his halberd techniques. His recent continuous battles had allowed him to comprehend some insights.

Each strike of the ancient halberd emitted a domineering, tyrannical force. But despite of this, Qin Wentian felt that something was wrong. The strikes that he executed did not have the overwhelming aura of the Human-type Divine Imprint he created.

“Qin Wentian.” At this moment, a voice filled with joy drifted over. Qin Wentian halted his movements and soon after, he noticed Mu Rou walking over.

“What a coincidence.” Qin Wentian smiled.

“After I received the news that you’ve returned to the Emperor Academy, I would come here everyday to see if I could meet you.” Mu Rou stared at Qin Wentian. Only now did Qin Wentian realize that this was the place where he and Mu Rou used to spar against each other.

Embarrassed, Qin Wentian smiled, as he stated, “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“Can’t I just look for you for no reason?” Mu Rou cast a bitter look over, causing Qin Wentian to smile sheepishly, only to hear Mu Rou laugh with amusement. “I’m teasing you. Tomorrow is my

18th birthday. Can you come here to give me your blessings, as well as exchange some pointers with me so that I can temper my movement techniques?”

“We can do it now as well.” Qin Wentian smiled, as he kept the ancient albert back in his ring. “Attack me as you will.”

“Okay.” Mu Rou laughed, then she started her attacks.

Mu Rou discovered that her attacks no longer had the ability to touch Qin Wentian. Every movement that Qin Wentian used to evade her attacks were incomparably wondrous. It was as though his body moved at the slightest intention of his will. His movements were more similar to an exquisite dance rather than the steps of a movement technique.

Even so, this sparring session was tremendously beneficial for Mu Rou. It continued all the way until perspiration drenched her body before she left the dreamscape together with Qin Wentian.

After Qin Wentian exited the Dreamsky Forest, he returned to his courtyard while deep in thought.

Looking at the painting he inscribed, Qin Wentian’s eyes lit up. Mu Rou treated him so well. Now that it was her 18th birthday, he definitely should give her a present to convey his congratulations!

AGM 097 – The Commotion Caused By A Painting

Today was Mu Rou's 18th birthday, but although this age could be considered the prime of her youth, she felt extremely lonely this year.

That was because this year, her family did not even bother to prepare a banquet for her. Also, the attitude of her 'friends' changed completely, and they didn't even offer their congratulations.

"Xue Yuan, Ke`er."

Mo Rou shared the beautiful courtyard she resided in with two other girls, and after seeing the two girls that lived with her, she called out to them

"Mu Rou, is there anything you need?" The two girls turned their heads and looked at Mu Rou.

"Today is my birthday. Let's go have a meal together." Mu Rou stated as she looked towards Xue Yuan and Ke`er.

"It's fine, you can go ahead, I have something to take care of." Xue Yue rejected with a laugh.

"I'm busy as well, I can't accompany you." Ke`er likewise

rejected and directly left without saying goodbye. Upon witnessing this scenario, Mu Rou couldn't help but to sigh in her heart. Although both of them were smiling on the surface, she could tell that their smiles didn't originate from their heart. Mu Rou had long sensed that her 'friends' no longer wanted to associate themselves with her and understood their intentions.

But even so, she was still truly disappointed. In the past when Chu Ling stayed here, the four of them had a pretty good relationship. Especially the relationship between her and Chu Ling, they were said to be the most intimate friends. Xue Yuan and Ke'er would always go along with what they said. Although Chu Ling often couldn't be bothered with the duo, Mu Rou didn't mind them that much, and she always had a good relationship with the two of them.

Mu Rou also stood up and departed, walking towards the direction of the Dreamsky Forest. Upon arriving at the familiar place in the City of Illusions, she left after waiting for a period of time as she didn't see Qin Wentian. In the past, she would have waited for a longer period of time. But today, she was distracted by recent events and decided to exit the dreamscape, strolling aimlessly about the Royal Academy.

At this moment, Xue Yuan and Ke'er made a trip back to their residence, but just before they stepped out again, they received a painting scroll delivered by Sky Transport Network.

The Sky Transport Network was one of the three biggest company in the Chu Country. At the same time, it offered the best courier services that could be found in the country. Rearing many

demonic beasts, as long as the customer was willing to pay a price, the Sky Transport Network could even deliver something out of the country at the shortest possible time. The Sky Transport Network also had special rights granted to them, enabling them to move about in all the martial academies unheeded.

After all, many students of the various academies came from all over the world and would need courier services to deliver letters back to their home town

This painting scroll was from the Emperor Star Academy and was to be delivered to Mu Rou. But because Mu Rou wasn't at her residence, the Sky Transport Network handed it over to Xue Yuan for her to pass it to Mu Rou.

Xue Yuan and Ke'er was somewhat curious but didn't pay too much attention to it. They brought the delivered scroll along with them as they went to attend a lecture held by an Elder. Although their relationships with Mu Rou weren't as close as before, they didn't mind passing along an item to her. And naturally, they wouldn't just "lose" the item. The Sky Transport Network could become one of the three greatest company in the Chu Country, so other than their courier services, they naturally possessed other terrifying methods in their hands.

In order to deliver items all over the continent, this task by itself would require a terrifying, immense network of informants so that they could be familiar with every place and even every person.

"Xue Yuan, what's that?" Chu Ling also attended the lecture today, and upon seeing the scroll case in Xue Yuan's hands, she

couldn't help but to ask.

“Oh, it's delivered by the Sky Transport Network. The recipient is Mu Rou, and it seems that it was delivered from the Emperor Star Academy. The courier didn't leave his name though.” Xue Yuan replied.

“The Emperor Star Academy? Open it up and see.” Chu Ling commanded, causing Xue Yuan to somewhat hesitate. This, doesn't seemed to be too appropriate. But after seeing Chu Ling furrowed her brows, she still decided to open the scroll case. Momentarily after, a mystical looking painting appeared in their sights. They involuntarily retreated a step backwards, causing the painting to land on the ground.

The moment the painting was revealed, they felt a surge of tyrannical aura emanating forth, as though that painting wanted to brand itself onto their souls.

“What happened?” The people at the sides crowded over, and they gazed at that mystical painting that has fallen on to the ground. They also felt that surge of tyrannical aura when the painting was unveil after it was out from the scroll case. It was as though the figure inside the painting was alive, wielding an ancient halberd, seeking to destroy everything in it's path.

“What a miraculous painting; it must be priceless.”

“Yeah, art collectors would go mad for this painting.” The crowd expressed their admirations while Chu Ling coldly snorted, “Isn't

it just a painting?”

But in her heart, Chu Ling was thinking, who exactly was it that actually gave such a painting to Mu Rou?

“What are all of you doing?” At this moment, a middle-aged figure appeared. This middle-aged man was none other than today’s lecturer. Seeing the commotion, he couldn’t help but walk over.

Almost instantly, the crowd cleared a path for the Elder. As the gaze of the Elder landed on the ground, he too, saw the painting.

“Who does this belong to?” The Elder from the Royal Academy asked.

“It’s Xue Yuan’s.” A person in the crowd pointed to Xue Yuan.

“Can you lend this to me?” That elder gazed at Xue Yuan. An awkward expression appeared on Xue Yuan’s face. This painting was delivered by the SKy Transport Network, and its recipient was Mu Rou, not her. And since she had agreed to pass it to Mu Rou, the responsibility naturally lied with her. The Sky Transport Network sought her opinion and only after she agreed did they pass that scroll case to her.

“Xue Yuan, if you have any problems regarding cultivation in the future, you can look for me.” That elder offered, causing the expression on Xue Yuan’s face to freeze. As an Elder, he surely

wouldn't lose the painting, right?

“Okay.” Xue Yuan nodded her head. That elder smiled before keeping that painting. “Today’s lesson will be postponed to a later date. Everyone, disperse.”

After that, he took the painting and hurriedly left, causing the students to exclaim in wonder, surround Xue Yuan, and bombard her with questions. What item would it be to cause the Elder to place it in such high importance?

With regards to this news, Mu Rou knew nothing about it. Even Qin Wentian himself had no idea of what was happening and had never even considered the worth of that painting.

After Mu Rou returned to her residence, she noticed that Xue Yuan seemed several times more polite to her. However, Mu Rou noticed that Xue Yuan appeared somewhat fidgety, which made her feel that there was something strange going on. However, she didn't concern herself too much with it and spent the day alone in sadness.

Today was her 18th birthday, and it was also the loneliest birthday she could recall in her memory.

Maybe it was because of the pressure from her clan. Her father, who always doted on her, also didn't attempt to invite her back

For those big characters, they were too sensitive about the

slightest current in their political webs of power. How could they have the time to bother themselves about her feelings?

The date for the Jun Lin Banquet gradually neared. With the possibility of the Nine Mystical Palace hiding in the shadows while controlling events from behind the scene, Luo Qianqiu's chances at obtaining the top ranking in the grand banquet, the arrival of the Snowcloud Country's Crown Prince, and the increasing power of Chu Tianjiao and his supporters, how could a friend of the infamous Qin Wentian not be frowned upon?

That day, in the midst of that snowstorm, Qin Wentian had rejected the chance to be friends with the 3rd Prince, Chu Tianjiao!

Today, the students of the Royal Academy didn't know that within the academy, several of the teachers were in a huge uproar because of the painting delivered from the Emperor Star Academy.

Naturally, they didn't know that this painting originated from the Emperor Star Academy, because according to the Elder who brought this matter to their attention, this painting belonged to a student of their Royal Academy named Xue Yuan. Since they already knew where it originated from, no one bothered to investigate the origins of this painting too deeply.

And today, the Royal Academy decided to display the painting in a gallery within the Royal Academy. Not only that, they decided that they would send out invitations to invite cultivators from all

around the country to view it, especially the weaponsmiths and Divine Inscriptionists!

The news quickly spread around the entirety of Chu Country. On the second day, the Royal Academy already publicised the fact this painting belonged to Xue Yuan and was a priceless treasure. They also announced the fact that they would send out invitations for people to view it, causing gigantic waves of commotion.

However, Xue Yuan felt extremely anxious in her heart. This painting did not belong to her, and if the truth got out, all her reputation would be destroyed instantly.

In her heart, Xue Yuan thought that now, her only possible move left was to reforge good relations with Mu Rou. After their relationship was mended, she would divulge the truth of the ownership of the painting to her.

Mu Rou felt very puzzled. She didn't understand why Xue Yuan was suddenly so courteous towards her and even invited her along for the viewing of the mystical painting. But then again, because she was also very curious about the painting that everyone was talking about, she decided to visit the gallery hall together with Xue Yuan.

The Gallery Hall of the Royal Academy was extremely grand and spacious. The painting was placed in the central point of attraction in the middle of the first level of the grand hall. There were many people surrounding it, but they all had to maintain a certain distance away from the painting.

Standing near the painting were several respected elders. Although they looked feeble with age, their eyes flickered with a piercing light, seemingly filled with vitality.

“There’s no mistake, this painting should be a Divine Imprint. This Human-type Divine Imprint, was most definitely a heaven-defying creation. I wonder which grandmaster created it.”

Filled with awe, an old man calmly gave the painting an exceptionally high evaluation.

“If one were to grade this painting according to the levels of Divine Imprints, this should be a 3rd-level Divine Imprint. The tyrannical aura it emanates is extraordinary. And I also dare to confirm, this is the first time this type of Divine Imprint appeared in the Chu Country.” Another person exclaimed, causing the crowd to be highly startled. This painting was actually a type of Divine Imprint!

“A heaven-defying creation. A priceless treasure.”

Countless people gave their evaluations, and some even inquired the Royal Academy’s Elders, “Is this painting for sale?”

“For this question, you have to ask the owner yourself.” That elder was none other than Xue Yuan’s teachers, and as he spotted Xue Yuan in the crowd, he smiled and called out, “Xue Yuan, are you willing to sell this painting?”

Xue Yuan froze, as she cast a glance at Mu Rou.

“If the painting is on sale, as a heaven-defying creation, you wouldn’t be able to imagine its price.” That Elder continued, “Also, how did you obtain the painting? Which grandmaster created it?”

Mu Rou also glanced at Xue Yuan, feeling surprise in her heart. Xue Yuan actually had such a priceless painting and even caused such a great commotion.

“The grandmasters from the Star River Association have arrived.” At this moment, a voice drifted over and heralded the arrival of several figures. The intentions for their arrival was clearly due to the painting.

AGM 098 – Who’s The Inscriptionist?

A total of four figures arrived from the Star River Association. The one in the lead was about 50 years of age, and the moment he entered, his gaze was fixated on the painting being displayed.

The person on his left was Murin. Behind Murin was none other than the student of the Royal Academy, Gretchen. After she knew that the Vice President of Star River Association wanted to come here personally today, she specially rushed over to lead the way.

“Vice President Zuo.” The various elders of the Royal Academy clasped their hands together in respect. Apparently, this group of visitors had an extraordinary background.

The Vice President of the Star River Association, Zuo Yin, was responsible for the weaponsmith division of the Star River Association. He wielded tremendous authority and was a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist himself. Such a person had actually chosen to come here to view the painting in person?

Zuo Yin slightly nodded in response to the Elders, as he directed his gaze over at Xue Ying. “Young lady, how about selling this painting to me? I’m willing to use a 3rd level Divine Weapon to exchange for it.”

Xue Ying’s heart trembled with desire. She wanted to say that it was hers, but the price of embezzling merchandise delivered by the Sky Transport Network wasn’t something she could bear.

“No.” A huge conflict rose in Xue Ying’s heart as she forced out the word.

“Young lady, what do you want in exchange? You can tell me directly. But remember,, such opportunities don’t come often.” Zuo Yin continued. Xue Ying didn’t dare to match his gaze.

“Zuo Ying, forcing a little lass like this doesn’t seems to appropriate for someone of your status, right?” At this moment, a voice drifted over. After Zuo Yin shifted his gaze over, his pupils involuntarily narrowed.

The person was clad in simple clothings and was an extremely ordinary-looking old man. He usually wouldn’t have stood out in a crowd of spectators, but the moment this old man appeared, Zuo Yin’s heart involuntarily shudder. With the appearance of this old fellow, it wouldn’t be easy for him to obtain that painting.

“Seem’s like I must handle this in a low-profile way.” Zuo Yin silently thought. Soon after, he whispered to Murin, “We must obtain the painting. Also, use all our resources to find the Inscriptionist who drew this. If this person hails from Chu, spare no expenses to invite him over to our Star River Association.”

Murin nodded in agreement. If this lass still refused their offer, he would directly seek the informant network of their Star River Association for assistance.

The waves of commotions caused by the painting grew increasingly larger and large. Panic started to arise in Xue Yin’s

heart, as a struggle could be visibly seen on her face. She decided that as of tomorrow, she would request for the painting to be returned to her before returning it to Mu Rou.

This piece of news naturally spread to all the Martial Academies. Even the Emperor Star Academy was also in a uproar with regards to this painting..

Currently, the Royal Academy temporarily opened up their gallery to the public, inviting outsiders to visit their academy to view the painting.

Mu Rou was feeling much better today when compared to before. Once again, she entered the Dreamsky Forest. Ever since she had been ostracised by others, the City of Illusions had become a place of refuge for her. She would often temper herself in it, relentlessly seeking to improve her combat ability.

Out of force of habit, Mu Rou revisited the place that was the most familiar to her, but this time around, Qin Wentian was actually there! Involuntarily breaking into a smile, she asked, “What are you doing here?”

“Yesterday we were supposed to meet here for your birthday, but because I was late, I didn’t manage to meet you. So I’m just trying my luck today.” Qin Wentian shrugged as Mu Rou assumed a slightly abashed expression, “You really came here yesterday? Sorry I’ve only waited for a short while before I left.”

“So that’s the reason, I thought that you encountered something

that caused you to be unhappy.” Qin Wentian smiled. Since he had already regarded Mu Rou as his friend, naturally, he would care about her feelings.

“You are over-thinking things.” Mu Rou gently smiled as she continued, “Oh yea, Qin Wentian, you are a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist. Currently, my Royal Academy is exhibiting a mystical Divine Inscription painting, open for all to view. Rumor has it that a grandmaster evaluated its grade to be comparable to a 3rd-level Divine Imprint. Do you want to come over here to take a look?”

“Divine Inscription painting?” Qin Wentian furrowed his brows. Although the news had spread to the Emperor Star Academy, he didn’t know of this.

“Yup, it’s a human-shaped figure wielding an ancient halberd. Now that I think of it, it look really alike to the weapon you’re wielding.” Mu Rou remarked.

Qin Wentian frowned. Human-shaped figure wielding an ancient halberd, Divine Inscription Painting? Wasn’t this the gift he prepared for Mu Rou?

“Mu Rou, the gift i prepared for you yesterday, did you received it?” Qin Wentian casually asked.

“Gift?” Mu Rou froze for a moment before revealing a joyful expression on her face. “I didn’t think that you would prepare a

gift for me. I've haven't receive it though. Did you ask a friend to deliver it? What's the gift you have for me?" Mu Rou smiled.

Mu Rou's words confirmed Qin Wentian's guess. It Seemed like he needed to have a talk with people from the Sky Transport Network.

"Wait for me in the Royal Academy, I'm coming right now." Qin Wentian spoke. He promptly turned around and departed.

"Hmm why is he in such a rush?" Mu Rou was somewhat puzzled, as she shouted to the back of Qin Wentian. "Then I will wait for you at the entrance of the Royal Academy."

After speaking, she smiled as she, too, departed. There was actually someone else that still remembered her birthday. Warmth blossomed in Mu Rou's heart. During this period of time in which she was being outcast, she had clearly seen the full scope of human emotions.

A true friend would never treat her like the others were treating her.

After Qin Wentian found the Sky Transport Network representative who was stationed in the Emperor Star Academy, they immediately launched an investigation upon receiving Qin Wentian's report, showing a very good attitude that was willing to cooperate with Qin Wentian.

And as for Qin Wentian himself, he departed for the Royal Academy soon after. Indeed, Mu Rou was waiting for him outside the gates of the Royal Academy.

“That was fast.” Mu Rou exclaimed somewhat in shock. As she observed Little Rascal rapidly transforming into a smaller version of itself, a brilliant light could be seen flickering in her eyes.

“The speed of this fellow is even faster than a dragon horse.” Qin Wentian smiled. “Let’s go and take a look at the Divine Inscription painting you mentioned.”

“It seems like you are very interested in this painting.” Mu Rou laughed as she led the way. Although their interactions in reality was very limited, they had grown familiar with each other during their spars in the dreamscape and had already treated each other as good friends.

There were many people crowding about in the Gallery Hall. Several weaponsmiths of great renown had all rushed over to the Royal Academy, and were awed by what they saw. Such a heaven-defying creation...The Human-type Divine Inscription wielding the halberd was actually made up of a godly combination of many other incredibly intricate, completed Divine Imprints that synergized extremely well together. In fact, they were so well-synergised that the end product seemed to be an entity of its own.

Greed and impulse appeared in many spectators’ hearts, wanting to take the painting for their own sakes. But within the Royal Academy, no one dared to be too audacious.

Even before Qin Wentian arrived in the Gallery Hall, he already met some familiar faces – Ye Zhan and Liu Yan

Ye Zhan halted his steps. Lips curling into a shallow smile, a cold light radiated from his eyes. Looking at Mu Rou, he stated, “Mu Rou, so your relationship with Qin Wentian was this good. I wonder what will happen if news about this was leaked to your Mu Clan.”

“It’s none of your business.” Mu Rou swept Ye Zhen a glance as she coldly replied.

Qin Wentian cast a sidelong glance at Liu Yan, his countenance incomparably calm. Previously, he had mistaken Liu Yan for his savior and had always went all the way out for her. Now that the misunderstanding was resolved, he had no more worries. Although Ye Zhan was dating Liu Yan, if Ye Zhan were to somehow fall in his hands, he wouldn’t be polite.

“Is that so?” Ye Zhan coldly laughed. As he was about to continue, however, Qin Wentian interjected, “You best shut your mouth.”

As the sound of his voice faded, an extremely cold aura emanated forth from his body, gushing towards Ye Zhan. Ye Zhan paled as he froze before glaring at Qin Wentian. He coldly laughed. “If not for the Emperor Star Academy’s support, did you think you could have survived until today?”

“If not for the fact that we are in the grounds of the Royal Academy, you would already be a dead man.” Qin Wentian took a step forwards, and a surge of immense pressure blasted out, causing Ye Zhan’s countenance to turn extremely unsightly. He immediately retreated two steps back.

“Let’s go.” Qin Wentian stated to Mu Rou, only to see Mu Rou’s cold eyes looking at Ye Zhan. “If not? If not for the fact you are born in the Ye Clan, do you dare to be so arrogant? Everything he achieved was achieved by his own hands. What qualifications do you have to speak of these two words, ‘if not’?”

After saying this, Mu Rou cast a glance at Liu Yan by Ye Zhan’s side as she added. “Your judgement really stinks.”

She then led Qin Wentian and entered the Gallery Hall together, causing the expression on Ye Zhan’s face to turn grim. Traces of malevolence flickered in his eyes.

The moment Qin Wentian saw the painting, a sharp light radiated from his eyes. This was the gift he had prepared for Mu Rou, but Mu Rou herself didn’t even know about it. This gift of his was actually displayed in the Royal Academy without obtaining his permission. No matter who it was, anyone would surely explode in anger.

However, when Qin Wentian neared the painting, he was actually blocked by someone. That person exclaimed, “Keep a distance away.”

Qin Wentian coldly snorted. He actually wasn't able to get close to his own creation?

“He is Qin Wentian from the Emperor Star Academy.” Ye Zhan's voice drifted over, as several gazes landed onto Qin Wentian.

Some one coldly laughed, “Qin Wentian of the Emperor Star Academy. What are you doing in my Royal Academy?”

“I heard that he's a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist. I wonder if it's true, he must have came here in hopes of gaining some insights from the painting.”

The Elders of the Royal Academy also shifted their gaze onto Qin Wentian. One of them spoke. “Since you are from the Emperor Star Academy, stand back.”

The Royal Academy was always in direct competition with the Emperor Star Academy, especially for the position of the number one martial academy in the Chu Country. Naturally, the Royal Academy would always try to make things difficult for students of the Emperor Star Academy. Not only that, this particular student was actually the infamous Qin Wentian. Why would they even be polite about it?

AGM 099 – A Very “Lame” Joke

Qin Wentian naturally could feel the enmity radiating from the Elder who spoke. Even though he had no interest in anything to do with the Royal Academy, they actually stole his painting?

Thus, against all expectations, he didn't retreat but chose to advance instead. He replied with a smile, “Naturally there's no problem asking me to stand back. But I want to bring back the painting that belongs to me.”

“Your painting?” This Elder was the one who had gotten the painting from Xue Yuan. He was staring at Qin Wentian, as he stated incredulously.

“Yup, this painting is mine.” Qin Wentian pointed to that painting as he calmly replied.

However, as the sound of his voice faded, it didn't create the level of commotion that he imagined. The spectators were only slightly stunned, their gazes trained on him.

He actually said that the painting displayed in the gallery of the Royal Academy was his. Was this a joke?

If the painting really belonged to him, the Royal Academy would have granted him preferential treatment like a valuable guest instead of asking him to back off and stand at the back. Wasn't this humiliating the intelligence of the Royal Academy?

This joke of his wasn't funny at all, and could even be considered lame.

“Yours? You are the inscriptionist?” That elder sarcastically remarked as though this was the funniest thing he heard in the world.

“Yup.” Qin Wentian sincerely nodded his head. This painting was indeed his.

“You.....” Upon seeing that Qin Wentian actually nodded his head, his youthful, good looking face actually had a ‘as it should be’ look plastered on it. The expressions of the crowd got more and more interesting. Could it be that this painting actually belonged to him?

That elder contemplated Qin Wentian's words, and a weird expression was displayed on his face. Qin Wentian's countenance was so honest, and he spoke with such a straight face. But he had personally borrowed this painting from Xue Yuan, who shouldn't have any connections with Qin Wentian. If that was the case, when did this painting became Qin Wentian's? And what was even more ridiculous was that Qin Wentian actually claimed that he was the one who had created it?

“Are all the students from the Emperor Star Academy as shameless as you?” That Elder coldly asked, his voice strongly filled with a sense of derision.

Although Qin Wentian's current status was extraordinary in the Emperor Star Academy, this was the Royal Academy after all. With his shameless boasting, wasn't he purposely seeking humiliation?

Many gazes in the crowd shifted away from Qin Wentian. However, contained within their eyes were filled with traces of interest. This fellow was pretty interesting.

“Little fellow, I heard rumors about you before. The young genius 3rd level inscriptionist grandmaster from the Divine Weapon Pavilion. However, do you truly understand what does this Human-shaped Divine Imprint means? With regards to the creation of this heaven-defying Divine Imprint, even those 3rd level Divine Inscriptionists who have countless years of experience would find it extremely tough to inscribe such a Divine Imprint, let alone creating it. You should wake up from your delusion.”

Beside the painting, a grandmaster weaponsmith spoke to Qin Wentian. His tone carried a hint of an elder lecturing to the younger generation.

As this person spoke, many weaponsmiths in the gallery hall revealed expressions of reverence on their faces. This old man was actually a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist and had an extremely respected position in the world of weapons forging.

Behind Qin Wentian, Mu Rou was slightly gloomy. What was Qin Wentian trying to do?

Walking forwards, she lightly pulled the sleeves of Qin Wentian

as she whispered, “Shall we go out for a walk?”

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to Mu Rou as he seriously replied, “This painting was truly created by me. Not only that, this is the gift that I had prepared for your birthday.”

Stunned, Mu Rou surveyed the serious looking expression on Qin Wentian’s face. It doesn’t seem as though he was joking.

Not only that, to her understanding, Qin Wentian would never make a joke about such matters.

Then, could it that what Qin Wentian said was true?

The painting that had created such huge waves of commotion, even shaking the world of the revered weaponsmiths, was actually a gift prepared for her?

Not to mention others, even Mu Rou herself found it hard to believe.

However, despite of this, Mu Rou gradually began to believe in Qin Wentian. But as the Qin Wentian’s words drifted over to the ears of the crowd, everyone who heard it treated what he said as a joke. Such a heaven-defying creation was actually given so cheaply as a birthday gift?

“What a load of crap. Birthday gift? Absolutely ridiculous.” The Elder disdainfully and coldly snorted. Qin Wentian’s words were

getting increasingly laughable by the moment.

“Boy from the Qin Clan. Even if you want to lie, shouldn’t you come up with a more convincing lie?”

At this moment, the sound of a familiar voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned his gaze over, only to see that the one who spoke was none other than Murin from the Star River Association.

“With regards to people like you, even looking at you makes my eyes feel soiled. I have no need to lie to you.” Qin Wentian remarked. Every time he saw Murin’s calm and prideful look, he would involuntarily be reminded of the poisonous soul that resided in Murin’s body.

Given a choice, he would not even deigned to cast a single glance at Murin. Swiftly after, he shifted his gaze away from Murin. Since he did not have the ability yet to make Murin pay the price for his actions in the past, why should he disgust himself by looking at Murin?

Murin turned’s countenance to ice the moment he heard Qin Wentian’s words. He coldly replied, “A lack of respect towards your elders, I truly admire the teaching methods of the Qin Clan. No wonder they produced a traitor like Qin Chuan.”

Murin’s words were even viler and many times more venomous than Qin Wentian’s previous statement.

“I wonder who was it that lured me and my clan members to the Star River Association with lies, then betrayed my family to the Ye Clan, and coveted the Divine Imprints in the possession of his previous assistant. It’s really difficult to imagine that such a person as yourself would also crave after the respect granted by others. I truly want to know how thick your skin is.” Qin Wentian shook his head as he spoke, not even bothering to cast a glance at Murin.

Murin’s brows were tightly creased together, as expressions of interest appeared on the faces of the crowd. However, at this moment, the Elder from the Royal Academy once again spoke.

“I don’t care how the Emperor Star Academy taught you, but this is the Royal Academy. The Royal Academy doesn’t welcome boorish people like you.” That Elder looked at Qin Wentian and continued, “Scram!”

The tone of the elder carried hints of force in them. Despite of his many years as a teacher, he had never met such an unbridled student. And moreover, that student was actually from the Emperor Star Academy.

“Well, I truly want to leave. But the problem is that without my permission, the Royal Academy actually dared to display my painting out in public and still wanted to chase me away in this manner”

Ever since the beginning of the exchange, Qin Wentian had shown a serious expression on his face. His words naturally caused an uproar. Students from the Royal Academy started to scold in anger, “This is really the first time I’ve met such a shameless

person.”

“If I were him, I would have scrambled as far as I could.”

Unfriendly voices drifted out one after another. After all, this was the Royal Academy.

To Qin Wentian, this place was filled with enmity.

“Do you really want me to personally make a move before you would scram?” The Elder took a step forwards, and an immense pressure came bearing down on Qin Wentian.

However against all expectations, Qin Wentian chose this moment to begin laughing uproariously. A radiant smile was actually displayed on his face.

“The Royal Academy represents the face and prestige of the Royal Clan. In the Royal Capital of Chu, this is top martial academy besides the Emperor Star Academy. I had initially thought that the Royal Academy would have a great deal of magnanimity, but it seems like I was wrong.” Qin Wentian slowly replied as he gazed at the Elder. “Things will soon be made clear. Let me give you a warning. The more you act like this, the worse the prestige of the Royal Academy will be tarnished.”

Looking at Qin Wentian’s steel-like, resolute countenance, many of the spectators’ hearts began to waver.

Qin Wentian didn't have any reason to spew any bullsh*t here. Could it be that everything he said was true?

“The Sky Transport Network has already launched its investigations. I'm sure we will soon have an answer.” Qin Wentian continued.

“What a load of nonsense.” The Elder coldly snorted. When did this has anything to do with the Sky Transport Network?

However, just at this moment, several silhouettes strolled leisurely over. They were none other than people from the Sky Transport Network.

They walked to the front of the crowd, and upon seeing the events unfolding, they couldn't help but involuntarily curse the people of the Royal Academy for being so stupid. Couldn't they even follow a simple instruction? If the painting had been passed to Mu Rou, how would there have been such an unfolding of events today?

With the current situation...If they revealed the truth right now, where could the Royal Academy hide their face?

“Elder, mm do you mind if I interrupt?” The person in charge from the Sky Transport Network spoke to the Elder, whose brows creased. This situation seemed a bit strange.

“Just say what you want to say directly in public. I hired the Sky

Transport Network to courier my gift, but to think that such a matter occurred because of your negligence. Don't tell me you still want to settle this matter quietly under the table?" Qin Wentian looked at the members of the Sky Transport Network as he calmly stated.

"Hmph." The Elder coldly snorted. He replied the representative from the Sky Transport Network, "Whatever you have to say, just say it. There's no need to hide anything."

That representative had an awkward look on his face. He apologetically bowed to Qin Wentian and the Elder, stating that, "Regarding this matter, the mistake was the fault of my Sky Transport Network."

Upon seeing this scene unfolding, many of the spectators were up in a uproar. It seemed as though it was very possible that there was something wrong with the origin of the painting.

The Sky Transport Network took the initiative to apologise to both the parties involved. They were indeed worthy of their title as one of the three greatest companies in the Chu Country.

"Elder, did this painting originate from a student of the Royal Academy named Xue Yuan?" The representative inquired.

"Yes." That Elder furrowed his brows as he nodded in agreement.

"If that's the case, there's no doubt that the true owner of this

painting is Qin Wentian from the Emperor Star Academy.” The representative once again bowed apologetically to the Elder from the Royal Academy.

However, no one paid attention to what he was doing.

The sound of his words shattered the void of the silent space like the firing of a cannon, causing many hearts to tremble violently.

Was this a joke?

If this was a joke, wasn't it too lame?

Such a scenario, wasn't it too dramatic? Where would the Royal Academy hide their face now?

Especially since right before this, the voice of the Royal Academy's Elder had been so powerful and resonating, completely convinced that what Qin Wentian had said was a bunch of bullsh*t.

AGM 100 – Change In Attitude

Xue Yuan had actually already left the place. However, as she was strolling leisurely in the grounds of the Royal Academy, she discovered several people rushing towards the galley, and there were even rumors spreading that someone purposely came to create trouble, actually claiming that the mystical painting was his.

Panic rose in her heart, and she immediately rushed back to the gallery. There, she coincidentally heard the conversation between Qin Wentian and that Elder, as well as witnessed the arrival of those from the Sky Transport Network.

At this moment, she was standing in the crowd, her countenance incomparably pale.

Not only her, all the students from the Royal Academy that was in the Gallery Hall had expressions of disbelief and shock written on their faces, as they regarded the representative of the Sky Transport Network. The representative could only smile bitterly. He also had not thought that the fiasco today could actually be caused by a series of unfortunate coincidences.

“Tell me you are joking, right?” The Elder from the academy had a crestfallen face, as he continued defending. “This Divine Inscription painting, belongs to Xue Yuan, a student of my Royal Academy. I personally loaned this from her.”

“How could my Sky Transport Network be mistakened. This

painting was our responsibility, and it was supposed to be a gift from Qin Wentian to Miss Mu Rou. However, Miss Mu Rou wasn't there at her residence, and thus our employee checked to see if Xue Yuan was willing to help to pass it on to Miss Mu Rou. Xue Yuan did agreed, which was why we were assured to leave the painting in her hands."

That representative bitterly smiled, causing the countenance of the crowd to freeze. If that was the case, didn't this means that Qin Wentian's words were actually true?

Was the painting truly a gift that he had prepared for Mu Rou?

A brilliant light flashed incessantly in Mu Rou's beautiful eyes. Glancing over at Qin Wentian, she couldn't believe that this fellow actually wanted to give her such a valuable gift? But in her heart, she was happy. After all, her birthday had been extremely lonely.

"Is Xue Yuan here?" That Elder swept his gaze across the crowd. Xue Yuan walked out with her head lowered, her countenance pale white. "Teacher, this painting was really something that I have accepted on behalf of Mu Rou, and I had planned to return it to her today."

Seeing Xue Yuan admitting it in public, the last bit of suspicions in the hearts of the crowd was completely dispelled.

This Divine Inscription painting actually belonged to Qin Wentian.

Silence descended upon the Gallery Hall.

Mu Rou cast a glance at Xue Yuan, before revealing a disappointed expression on her face. No wonder Xue Yuan's attitude towards her changed. To think that she was so shameless and actually took the painting Qin Wentian wanted to give her for her own sake.

“You say the Divine Imprints in this painting were inscribed by you? If that's the case, why don't you create another painting right now to prove that there's no falsehood in your words?” The Elder from the Royal Academy decided to break the silence.

Qin Wentian twitched his brow, as he glanced at the elder.

“The Sky Transport Network personally came to be my witness, and Xue Yuan also admitted. But you still want to deny my claim to it? This is truly the first time I've seen a person like you.” A cold smile hung on Qin Wentian's visage. “Why must I create another painting just to satisfy your curiosity? Am I very familiar with you?”

After hearing Qin Wentian's words, the elder had no way to refute, no power to resist.

Those that were sarcastic earlier were currently keeping their mouths shut.

Earlier, the Royal Academy had been harshly humiliating Qin

Wentian. But at this moment, the slap of reality resounded extremely loudly.

“I’m politely directing this question to the Elders of the Royal Academy. Can I please take my painting back now?” Qin Wentian calmly asked as he walked towards the direction of the painting.

Earlier, when he had merely approached the painting, not only was he blocked, they actually told him to stand at the back of the line.

But now, this painting obviously belonged to Qin Wentian!

Qin Wentian stood beside the Divine Inscription painting and rolled it up. And at this moment, a weaponsmith standing in the crowd smiled and asked, “Little brother, did you truly create this painting?”

“Oh, I have no idea.” Qin Wentian smiled. He also knew that he had underestimated the value of this painting.

Since even now there were people suspecting him, he didn’t bother to explain too much.

“Grandmaster Qin, my name is Yan Ye. If there’s an opportunity, perhaps we can get to know each other.”

“Haha, brother Qin, I’m a guest weaponsmith of the Divine Weapon Pavilion. You can call me Lu Feng. I’ve long admired the

name of brother Qin, and I truly hope to get to know brother Qin this time around.”

At this moment, several figures appeared and politely introduced themselves to Qin Wentian.

“This inexperienced me doesn’t dare to name myself a grandmaster. Just calling me Wentian would do.”

“Being able to have an exchange with seniors is my luck and fortune.”

Qin Wentian smiled and agreed to the weaponsmiths surrounding him, appearing extremely humble. The status of these people were all extraordinary. There wasn’t anything disadvantages for him in making friends with these figures.

“Earlier, I didn’t dare to believe even after I’ve heard the rumours. To think that a youth of more than ten years could actually inscribe 3rd level Divine Inscriptions. Now that I’ve personally seen the painting, I can only say that there’s always a sky beyond a sky. No matter how talented one is, there’s always someone with more talent out there. I’ve truly grown old.” An elderly figure lamented, as he continued. “Talent is really something miraculous. I’m afraid that even if I spend all my life, I would still not be able to create something like that painting.

“Indeed, indeed. Haha, we really shouldn’t be too proud in the future. Wentian, was this painting really created by you?” A person inquired. Qin Wentian was currently surrounded by many

others, and he couldn't help but to smile bitterly in his heart.

Witnessing the events unfolding caused the people from the Royal Academy to all have extremely ugly expressions on their faces. Was still still the Royal Academy? Why did it seems as though this place had become Qin Wentian's house. Not only that, a group of highly esteemed seniors were all asking for guidance and forging good relationship with Qin Wentian.

“The connections of expert weaponsmiths are indeed terrifying to behold.” Many people silently remarked in their hearts.

There was a saying in the Chu Country: You can offend anyone you want to, with the exception of expert weaponsmiths. There was a rumor that in the Royal Capital of Chu, there was once a leader of a sect that had humiliated an expert weaponsmith that had an extremely low level of cultivation. A few days later, a group of several Yuanfu experts surrounded the offending sect, annihilating everyone in the span of a single night.”

“Because of a series of fortunate circumstances, I luckily gained some insights and thus was able to create the painting.” Qin Wentian modestly smiled as he replied. The countenance of the crowd didn't change, but they felt even more awe in their hearts. At this moment, there was no one who dared to doubt Qin Wentian anymore.

In the history of Chu Country, there was no record of anyone inscribing a Human-type Divine Imprint before. But to think that now, this miracle had actually been created by such a young genius.

“Little fellow, are you willing to sell this painting to me?”

At this moment, a voice abruptly drifted over. The crowd turned their gaze in the direction of the voice. This voice belonged to an old man who looked extremely ordinary. However, the moment the gazes of the crowd landed on him, the countenance of everyone changed. To think that this person was actually interested in the painting.

“Yes. If you are willing to sell, my Star River Association is willing to pay you an unimaginable price for it.” Murin also quickly interjected, causing Qin Wentian to look over to him.

Never would Murin have expected that the painting was actually inscribed by Qin Wentian. Ever since he had wanted to accept Qin Wentian as a disciple but was rejected, he had always harboured hatred in his heart. However, that youth’s speed of growth far surpassed his imaginations. If this continued, Qin Wentian would eventually have the power to threaten him.

Regarding that painting, it was something that Vice President Zuo had instructed him to obtain it at all costs. But what made Murin depressed was that Qin Wentian was actually the owner of this painting. Without a choice, he could only grit his teeth as he made his offer.

“You want it?” Qin Wentian cast Murin a glance.

Murin nodded his head. “As long as you are willing. No matter

the price, we will accept.”

He believed, that the debt of hatred between him and Qin Wentian wouldn't obstruct the exchange of mutual benefits.

“The price is one of your arms. Deal or no deal?” Qin Wentian calmly replied, causing the countenance of Murin to instantly turn icy.

Qin Wentian didn't glance at him again. Qin Wentian would make sure that the arrogant Murin would pay the full price for his actions in the past. This day wouldn't be too long in from now.

Currently, with his status and accomplishments in the world of weaponsmiths, he believed that he had already far surpassed Murin

Qin Wentian gazed at the figure beside Murin as he stated, “I once had a heart filled with sincerity, wanting to join the Star River Association as a guest. However, my sincere heart was betrayed by Murin. But of course, I believe that his actions had nothing to do with the Star River Association.”

Qin Wentian didn't continue talking after that. But merely with that single sentence of his, Murin's heart began to lurch wildly. What a ruthless Qin Wentian! One could infer many meanings just from a single sentence.

For example, if Murin was dealt with, there was still a possibly

for Qin Wentian to form a relationship with the Star River Association.

If the Star River Association wanted to recruit Qin Wentian, Murin shouldn't even dream about using the power of the Star River Association to deal with Qin Wentian. On the contrary, Murin still had to worry about the off chance that the Star River Association would forsake him for Qin Wentian.

After this, Qin Wentian glanced at the ordinary looking old man and smiled at him. "I'm sorry to have made senior wait for so long. As for this Divine Inscription painting, i've already given it to my friend, Mu Rou."

"If I didn't guess wrongly, this Divine Inscription painting could only be created because of a rare moment of epiphany. I don't think that it would be easy if you wanted to attempt creating a similar painting again. And not only that, the value of the first painting would definitely be the highest. Are you sure you bear to gift it to someone else?"

The countenance of that old man had a smile that was not a smile plastered on it, as he looked towards Qin Wentian.

"Since it's a gift to a friend, how can we equate it with money? This gift represents my sincerity. If it were not for some shameless people, it would already be in my friend's possession." Qin Wentian smiled and continued, "But of course, if my friend is willing to sell it to senior, I will have no objections."

Following which, Qin Wentian turned and passed the painting to Mu Rou with a smile. “Although there was some delay, now that I’ve personally deliver my gift to your hands, I hope it can mitigate my carelessness from earlier.”

Mu Rou’s head was slightly lowered. As she raised her head, redness could be seen in her eyes, as she was evidently moved.

This painting had created such gigantic waves of commotion. It’s value was naturally clear to Mu Rou. In circumstances such as this, Qin Wentian was someone whom she had only met a few times. But despite of this, he still chose to send such a valuable gift for her birthday while her own family was so cold towards her in comparison.

How could she not be moved?

“Thank you.” Mu Rou didn’t reject it. A radiant smile appeared on her face. Filled with warmth, this friendship moved the hearts of the spectators.

“Why are you thanking me? Back then, you were also willing to be friends with me under those circumstances.” Qin Wentian laughed. He referred to the day at the banquet when everyone treated him with enmity. Under that intense pressure, Mu Rou stood up and announce to the whole world that Qin Wentian was a friend of hers.

On that day, Qin Wentian had already told himself that he would one day definitely repay the debt of gratitude!